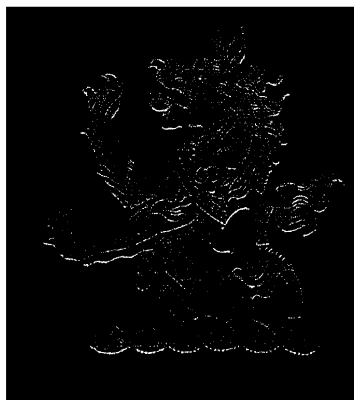


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THE ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER

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COLUMBUS

"Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! A light! A light! A light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn,
He gained a world; he gave that world,
It's grandest lesson: On! sail on!

JOAQUIN MILLER.

THE ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER

A PLAY OF THE DRAMATIC LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

*The scenes are in Genoa, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and
the great New World.*

The time is about 1445 to 1506.

•

CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *the son of a wool comber in Genoa.*

DOMINAC, *his father, a man of poverty and culture.*

BARTHOLOMEW, *his brother.*

DONNA PHILIPPA PERESTRELLO, *his bride.*

DIEGO, *his eldest son.*

PADRE MARCHENA, *guardian of the Convent of Santa Maria La Rabida, Franciscan convent, in Spain.*

ISABELLA, *Queen of Castile.*

FERDINAND, *King of Aragon.*

MARCO, GILBERTO, and CORRADO, *three fishermen.*

The Nobility at the brilliant court of Spain, Seamen and Sailors on board ship, Indians, Spanish dancing girls, etc.

•

THE ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER

ACT I.

SCENE 1.

Near the thriving seaport town of Genoa,—on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea,—in northern Italy.

(The picturesque birthplace of CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS—just outside the city walls. There is an old stone house, set well to the right, with a wide stone porch that commands a magnificent view of the sea in the background. Stretching away to the left, along the semi-circular bay, are high hills, mounting like turrets, which are a part of the beautiful Ligurian Alps. On nearby slopes one can glimpse groves of orange and twisted olive trees aflutter with blossoms. Higher up are dense green forests which appear almost black. A narrow road-way passes the house in the foreground and winds away to the far hills. Here and there in the distance it passes precipices and frowning cliffs which are washed by the singing

surf. A crude wooden pier extends out into the water;—several fishing vessels lie lazily at anchor,—and scattered along the rugged shore are romantic remnants of old ships.)

(It is nearing the evening hour of a summer day. The place is aglow with the warm red of the setting sun. Three fishermen, MARCO, GILBERTO, and CORRADO,—are sitting near the pier mending their nets. They are a merry crew, indeed,—big, burly men,—strong-featured,—with dark eyes and swarthy complexions much weathered by sea-going. MARCO, older by far than the others, has white hair and long beard. They are uncouth in dress and manner. All three are chanting lustily.)

THE FISHERMEN.

Our captain wants a sailor, lad,
To sail the blue sea o'er,
To put away,
To far Cathay,
And bring back gold galore!

Who knows a lad both brave and bold,
When waves are dashing high?
When death-heads ride,

Upon the tide,
'And—thunder's in the sky!
(*Their voices gather volume.*)

'Ahoy! My merry lad,—Ahoy!
O, here's the ship for you,
Go sail away,
To far Cathay,
Across the bonny blue!

GILBERTO (*jokingly*).

Marco, ye old swashbuckler,—by all the gods,
can ye not keep in tune?

MARCO.

Begone, ye young stripling! Ye and Corrado
should follow me. Aye,—I sang that song the
night we sank the Venetian galley off the coast
of Sicily.

CORRADO (*laughing*).

Hear him, Gilberto! Marco sank a Venetian
galley! Ha! Ha!

GILBERTO (*teasingly*).

And—today—he could not catch—even a sun-
fish!

MARCO (*patiently, his eyes twinkling*).

While I made ready the bait—ye changed my

net and gave me yours. (*Extravagantly*). A hundred holes they were in it! The fish dropped smack through the bottom.

GILBERTO.

Ye are not shrewd, Marco, old fellow. Have ye never heard—“Ye must look at the wind before ye loose the boat?” Ha! Ha! A gallant fisherman ye are, Sir!

(*At this, MARCO makes a sudden movement—and overpowering GILBERTO—imprisons him with a fishing net. Quickly and skillfully he ties a rope around him—and with a playful gesture of triumph—tosses him to one side.*)

MARCO (*in good natured contempt*).

That for ye! Now see if ye can undo my sailor’s knot!

(*GILBERTO tussles with the rope in an effort to free himself. CORRADO and MARCO laugh at his struggle in gay good humor. As they are thus engaged, a boy’s voice is heard calling from a distance.*)

THE VOICE (*summoning*).

Marco! Marco!

(*MARCO glances around. In a moment a tall young lad of about fourteen years enters. He carries a huge oar, painted in bright*

colors with strange symbols. The boy is CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. He is an earnest youth—dreamy-eyed, brooding—yet there is about him something eager—wistful—joyous. He wears the close fitting doublet worn by the European men of the fifteenth century; one woven of fine, dark blue wool. His hair, hanging to his shoulders, is wind-blown from his run on the beach. As he approaches MARCO, it is evident that he is much excited.)

MARCO.

What ails ye, Signorino?

(CHRISTOPHER holds out the oar with the symbols upon it.)

CHRISTOPHER.

Look, Marco, Look! The strange thing I have found on the beach. Cast up by the waves near Bassagno!

(They gather around him. GILBERTO cries out from the fishing net.)

GILBERTO.

Let me see! Get me out o' this, Christopher! Get me out!

(CHRISTOPHER releases him. MARCO takes the oar. They gaze on it in wonder.)

MARCO (*in amazement*).

By all the gods! Sich a thing I have niver
laid me blasted eyes on!

CHRISTOPHER (*touching it*):

Look, here is a figure that looks almost like the
sun! A circle with straight rays pointing out
from it! Mayhap, it may be a form of pagan
worship.

GILBERTO (*superstitiously*).

Careful ye! They may be symbols o' the
devil!

CORRADO (*agreeing*).

Aye, Aye,—beware! Sich a fantastic thing
may bring ye evil.

MARCO.

Niver have I seen its like in all the seas I've
sailed.

CHRISTOPHER (*pondering*).

Strange things I have read in the tales of
Marco Polo. Drawings has he made of the
northsman's oars and those of viking kings.
But never has he spoken of symbols such as
these. (*He takes it from MARCO and examines
it.*)

MARCO.

Ye are mad to keep it, Signorino. Give it back to the sea. I don't like the looks o' thim volcanoes.

CHRISTOPHER.

I'll store it in my treasure chest. (*Thoughtfully*) Mayhap the tides have brought it all the way from India. Someday, I shall know. (*He turns away*) Wait for me here, and I'll come back and help you mend your nets.

(*He goes toward the house. They stare after him for a moment—then go back to their nets.*)

MARCO.

A bright young 'un he is. It is a great sailor he will be someday.

GILBERTO.

He has the sailor's eye. Not a speck escapes him. Old Dominac says all his time is spent watchin' the big ships come and go in the bay at Genoa.

MARCO.

It is not so long ago that he spied the pirate ship from Africa—full three leagues away. Ye remember what praise he got for the likes o' that.

GILBERTO.

Disguised as it was—it could o' come right into the harbor.

CORRADO.

'Tis said he showed great marks o' learnin' while at school in Pavia.

MARCO.

Aye, and discontent he seems now with his father's wool combing trade in Genoa.

CORRADO.

Mayhap, he'll steal away to sea.

MARCO.

'Twould surprise—no one.

(The sky grows darker. It is nearing the hour of twilight. As they prepare to gather up their nets—CHRISTOPHER returns. DOMINAC and BARTHOLOMEW are with him. It is evident that there is a happy comraderie between the father and sons.)

DOMINAC *(heartily)*.

Evening, Marco—and to you—Corrado and Gilberto.

THE FISHERMEN.

Evening, Dominac.

CHRISTOPHER (*eagerly*).

Tell them the news, father. Tell them the news!

DOMINAC (*smiling*).

It is your news, son.

CHRISTOPHER (*proudly*).

The word has just come. I am to go to sea—at sunrise. Fancy that, Marco. I am to go to sea!

MARCO.

On board your grand-uncle's ship, Signorino?

CHRISTOPHER.

Aye, we'll fare forth to Africa,—Calcutta and Bombay. Mayhap, even to Cathay! (*With zest.*) Think of it, Marco,—a rover's life! Fighting the winds and the tides! Taking strange courses into far, far waters. Life! Adventure! And the rich cargoes we shall hoard—silks,—spices—pearls!

BARTHOLOMEW (*shyly*).

I shall be sad to see you go.

CHRISTOPHER (*tenderly*).

You must not be sad, bambino. (*Playfully*)

I shall bring you back a dragon. And to Dominac—gold enough for years of ease.

DOMINAC (*sadly*).

So gaily can our sons depart—

CHRISTOPHER (*broodingly*).

Mayhap, there are strange lands, my father, of which we do not know—

MARCO.

Do not sail too far, Signorino. The world is flat, ye know. Your ship will fall off the ocean and drop forever into space.

BARTHOLOMEW (*alarmed*).

Go not out there, Christopher! Oh, go not there!

CHRISTOPHER (*consolingly*).

I shall have the stars to guide me. Do not fear, little brother.

GILBERTO (*the superstitious one*).

What if all the stars should fall—? What then?

CHRISTOPHER (*merrily*).

Begone—with you!

MARCO.

Come, my hearties,—we have yet to go to Genoa by nightfall. (*To CHRISTOPHER*). See you at sunrise, Signorino.

(*The fishermen depart.*)

DOMINAC.

Will you walk with us, son, down to Bassagno? I have business there tonight.

CHRISTOPHER.

I shall remain here by the sea, father, until you return.

(DOMINAC and BARTHOLOMEW *trudge away to the west*. CHRISTOPHER *stands for a long moment looking out to sea—head up—eyes shining*. He *ponders—aloud.*)

CHRISTOPHER.

The strange thing that I found washed upon the shore tonight could not have come from the East. What it is—or from whence it came—must lie westward in uncharted seas. Someday, I shall take my course there.

(*He stoops down and gathers a handful of sand—and sifts it through his fingers.*)

CHRISTOPHER (*murmuring*).

Sands of the sea,—sands of the sea! What

you are—or from whence you came—must hold a world therein! (*He gazes out to sea; then, with a sudden burst of happiness.*) Oh, I am to go to sea tomorrow!

(*With a boyish gesture of freedom, he lies down on the beach, as though in his passion for the sea, he cannot get close enough. . . . His hand trails in the water as—*

The Curtain Falls.

ACT I.

SCENE 2.

(*About fifteen years later—in the quaint old bookshop of BARTHOLOMEW COLUMBUS, brother of CHRISTOPHER, in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. To the left, the walls are lined with shelves, on which are innumerable books of navigation; to the right are hung many ancient maps and charts. In the rear, a fire burns low in an old stone fireplace, above which hangs a ship model, of an antiquated galley. Through a gothic window, right of the fireplace, one can see stark, granite hills looming on the banks of the Tagus river. High-backed chairs are placed here and there at random, and in the foreground is a huge oak table of Spanish design—strewn with books and maps.*)

(*It is early morning. BARTHOLOMEW grown to young manhood, busies himself about the shop. He whistles as he works. At length he surveys the place with satisfaction.*)

BARTHOLOMEW.

A neat shop, indeed. Well can I afford to send funds to my father now. Alas! Things have not fared so well with him. (*A knock is*

heard on the door.) What? A knocking at the door so early after dawn? Enter!

(The door is slightly opened. A strange looking man enters—carrying a huge oar which he uses as a staff. He is evidently weak from much exertion. His clothes are dripping wet; his hair tangled; he is barefooted. He staggers to a chair. BARTHOLOMEW rushes to aid him.)

BARTHOLOMEW.

You are in a wretched state, my fellow. Tarry here a moment while I bring you drink.

(The man's head droops upon his chest. BARTHOLOMEW waits for a moment—and returns with a tankard of ale. He places it to the stranger's lips.)

BARTHOLOMEW.

Drink this, friend. I'll warrant it will warm you. You are trembling from the cold,—even though 'tis May.

(The stranger succeeds in swallowing a little of the ale. BARTHOLOMEW brushes back the hair from his face—and for the first time recognizes him—as CHRISTOPHER.)

BARTHOLOMEW *(hugging him impulsively)*.

Christopher! Do you know me not? *(Eagerly)*
It is I—I,—Bartholomew!

(*For a moment CHRISTOPHER vouches no recognition. BARTHOLOMEW tucks a heavy blanket around him.*)

BARTHOLOMEW (*pitifully*).

You are spent with weariness. Christopher—my brother!

(*Suddenly, a spark of recognition comes into his eyes. He gazes at BARTHOLOMEW for a long moment, then speaks.*)

CHRISTOPHER (*tenderly*).

Little Bambino! Bartholomew!

BARTHOLOMEW.

What has happened, Christopher? Tell me! You look as though you have been drawn through a knot-hole.

CHRISTOPHER (*slowly regaining his strength*).

War with the Venetians, Bartholomew. I was commanding a fleet under Colombo il Mozo. We were scouting the sea for the rich ships of the Queen of the Adriatic.

BARTHOLOMEW (*eagerly*).

You came upon them?

CHRISTOPHER.

Between Lisbon and Cape St. Vincent. After

terrible struggle—both fleets took fire. Had it not been that Providence threw this oar in my way—I could not have swum to shore. I have walked here all the way from Setubal.

BARTHOLOMEW.

Come into my sleeping room and rest. When you are less weary—we shall talk much.

(*He assists him into an inner room. While he is gone, a girl enters the shop. She is young and beautiful; the dusky blue of her eyes, blue-black hair, and red lips contribute a haunting contrast to her red gown and mantilla of lace. It is DONNA PERESTRELLIO, daughter of an Italian navigator. She browses about the shop. At length, BARTHOLOMEW enters.*)

BARTHOLOMEW (*with pleasure*).

Donna Philippa! Abroad so early in the morning.

DONNA PHILIPPA.

Enchanting it is to walk abroad a morning in May, Bartholomew.

BARTHOLOMEW.

You are searching for a certain volume?

DONNA PHILIPPA.

Yes. The "History of Navigation" for my father.

BARTHOLOMEW.

I will find it for you.

(He searches among the books on the shelves and at length produces the volume. As he is about to present it to her, a party of young naval officers enter—all in the gayest of spirits. DONNA PHILIPPA retires to an obscure corner.)

AN OFFICER.

Ho! Ho! Here's Bartholomew! Good morning, my friend. Let us make your shop our rendezvous for the next hour—and come drink with us the finest wine in Portugal.

(He produces a bottle of wine.)

BARTHOLOMEW *(good naturedly)*.

Aye, I should turn my book shop into an inn. Such a resort you naval men make of it.

AN OFFICER.

Good Fellow! *(He places the bottle upon the table.)* Look, Bartholomew. See, how it sparkles! That's real Port for you.

(A few officers sit upon the table; others cluster

around the fireplace. One prepares to pour the wine. Another takes a guitar from its case and plays upon it. They sing merrily, an old ballad, to its accompaniment.)

The Song

“ ’Twas in the good ship Nancy Bell,
That we sailed to the Indian Sea,
And there on a reef, we came to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

“And pretty nigh all the crew was drowned,
(There were seventy-seven o’ soul)
And only ten of the Nancy’s men,
Said ‘Here’ to the muster-roll!”

(DONNA PHILIPPA approaches BARTHOLOMEW. *She is very proud of bearing, and wears her mantilla drawn over her face. The officer pouring the wine hastens toward her and bows—after the manner of a cavalier.)*

THE OFFICER

Donna Philippa! A thousand pardons we implore. You must have been in hiding in a remote corner for we were not aware of your presence.

DONNA PHILIPPA (*graciously*).

You are pardoned, Señor. I came here only

for a book for my father. You gentlemen are on leave?

THE OFFICER.

For a few hours only.

DONNA PHILIPPA.

Kindly let me pass, Señor. I must go.

AN OFFICER (*one near the table*).

First, let us drink to the loveliest one in all Lisbon! Our toast to—Donna Philippa!

(*As the officers drink to her—CHRISTOPHER appears in the doorway. He is immaculately attired—and creates a distinguished appearance among the naval men. Oblivious of the others for a moment, DONNA PHILIPPA stares into his eyes. BARTHOLOMEW rushes to present him.*)

BARTHOLOMEW.

My brother—Christopher—my friends. He arrived here only today after war with the Venetians just off Cape St. Vincent.

THE OFFICERS.

Welcome, Friend.

BARTHOLOMEW.

May I present you, too, Donna Philippa—to my brother—Christopher?

DONNA PHILIPPA.

Most surely. (*She raises her eyes to CHRISTOPHER coquettishly.*) My father has told me much of you. You were commanding a ship under Colombo il Mozo,—were you not?

CHRISTOPHER (*smiling*).

Until yesterday— Yes. (*He looks down at her strangely, then murmurs.*) Donna Philippa!

(*She smiles merrily, then turns to BARTHOLOMEW.*)

DONNA PHILIPPA.

Now, I beg of you, give me the book. I should have been gone—long since. (*To the officers*) Good-day, gentlemen. (*To CHRISTOPHER and BARTHOLOMEW*) Good-day, friends.

(*The officers bow to her as she waves farewell from the doorway. CHRISTOPHER stands staring after her. BARTHOLOMEW gibes him.*)

BARTHOLOMEW.

Come, Christopher,—the vision is gone!
(*CHRISTOPHER joins in their laughter nonchalantly. He drinks with the officers as*

The Curtain Falls.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.

A "cell" in the Convent of Santa Maria La Rabida at Palos, in southern Spain. It is typical of the little Franciscan convents in the Middle Ages; bleak and austere—with walls and floor of gray stone. A huge cross hangs on the wall. A bare table, a cot, and a few straight chairs are its only furnishings. A heavy Moorish door in the rear leads out on to the top of the cliffs which overlook the sea. There is one small window set high in the wall—and crossed with iron bars.

(It is the evening hour. A misty gloom pervades the convent. In the tower the Angelus bells are ringing. A procession of gray cowed friars enter—marching two by two—and chanting the "Ave Maria"—the holy song of the church. They pass out through the outer door. When they are gone, PADRE MARCHENA enters—bearing a candle. He places it on the table; opens a prayer book, and absorbs himself in it. As he reads, he is disturbed by a knocking at the door. He

opens it. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS *is standing outside holding a little boy by the hand. It is his son—DIEGO.*)

CHRISTOPHER.

Good-evening, Padre. May I ask of you a little nourishment for my son?

PADRE MARCHENA (*hospitably*).

Enter! The day has almost vanished and it is weary thou must be traveling these stony paths by foot.

CHRISTOPHER (*entering*).

I am most grateful, Padre.

PADRE MARCHENA.

Thou must pass the night here, friend. There are lonely byways hereabouts whence it is not safe to travel with a child. (*He indicates a chair near the table.*) Come, sit here. In a moment I shall return with food and drink. (*He exits.*)

(CHRISTOPHER *draws a chair up to the table for* DIEGO. *The child droops wearily—and rests his head upon his hands.*)

CHRISTOPHER (*caressing DIEGO's hair*).

Cheerio, son! A brave little soldier you have been today. You shall have food now—and a

warm cot to cuddle on. Come, let me unloose your boots.

(*He takes off DIEGO's boots. The child smiles, then droops again, chattering sleepily as he rests his head upon the table.*)

DIEGO.

Who is this man, my father?

CHRISTOPHER.

One of the good Gray Friars, son. This one must be the guardian of the convent.

DIEGO.

What is a friar, father?

CHRISTOPHER.

One who takes the monastic vows, my son, and lives a religious life for the church. The vows are three in number—poverty—chastity—and obedience.

(*After a moment, CHRISTOPHER sits staring into space. . . . He has the grim aspect of one who has dreamed much—and fought much to capture his dreams. His eyes, large and deep, seem to glow with a purpose, fixed as a star. . . . PADRE MARCHENA re-enters, bearing food and drink. He sets it before the two travelers. As they partake of it, he scrutinizes CHRISTOPHER keenly.*)

PADRE MARCHENA.

Whither art thou going, friend?

(CHRISTOPHER is silent for a moment, then answers the PADRE with much dignity.)

CHRISTOPHER.

I am from Italy. I am on my way to the Court at Cordova to lay an important plan before King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

PADRE MARCHENA (*with delight*).

Thou art on thy way to the good queen, Isabella? Thou must give her my good wishes. She is a friend of mine, son,—and as great a queen as ever reigned over the kingdom of Castile. If thou wilt confide in me thy plan, I may be of much assistance to thee.

CHRISTOPHER (*most pleased*).

Worthy Padre! It will interest you to hear the story of my mission?

PADRE MARCHENA.

Greatly.

CHRISTOPHER.

My little son is very weary. Let us first tuck him in bed.

(*They make a comfortable bed for DIEGO on the cot. He sleeps. The men seat themselves*

at the table again. PADRE MARCHENA lights another candle—and from time to time, they drink from the tankard.)

CHRISTOPHER.

I have come a long way, Padre, in search of someone who will have faith in my mission.

PADRE MARCHENA (*encouragingly*).

Is it a religious mission, son?

CHRISTOPHER.

It is one of religion and exploration also. Since I have been little more than fourteen years of age, I have followed the sea. Much have I loved it. Much have I pondered it. My son's mother was the daughter of a man wise in the ways of navigation. Perhaps, you have heard of Donna Perestrello's father? Yes?

PADRE MARCHENA.

He is one who made many voyages of exploration. He died while Governor of the Madeira Islands.

CHRISTOPHER.

The same. While associated with him I learned much of the laws of navigation. I studied deeply the sciences and cosmography. I came to the conclusion that the earth we are on

—is not flat—like a spear—but round—as a globe. (*Bitterly*) It is a sound theory. And—yet—the world laughs.

PADRE MARCHENA (*soothingly*).

A prophet is always scorned, my son. A torch-bearer knows no light except from his own flame. Is it this idea thou would'st submit to the Spanish kings?

CHRISTOPHER.

It is, with the proposal that they equip a fleet which I might command to cross the Atlantic—and the unknown seas. I believe we shall find a shorter route to Cathay by sailing westward,—and thereunto extend the rites of Christianity.

PADRE MARCHENA.

A worthy cause. Hast thou submitted it elsewhere, my son?

CHRISTOPHER.

To Genoa,—my native republic first. They would have none of it. And then to Venice—whence it was viewed with no greater favor. At length, I proposed it to the king of Portugal. He rejected it as being unwise. Again I petitioned Genoa, without success. Now—I go to the Spanish kings. If they will not heed—I shall hasten to the court of France.

PADRE MARCHENA.

Thou dost not lack the art of being persistent, son. Every great mission is beset with difficulties. Let us consider it together.

CHRISTOPHER.

You are most kind, Padre. Can it be that you, too, believe as I do?

PADRE MARCHENA.

The theory must be proven. I believe it worthy of the test. Spain—or any other land, I wager,—has much to gain by discovering a short route to Cathay.

CHRISTOPHER (*eagerly*).

You think the Spanish kings will favor it?

PADRE MARCHENA (*kindly*).

Thou must have patience, son. Patience is the god of progress. (*Sadly*) The spirit of the times is ominous. Spain is in the throes of war to abolish Granada, the last of the Moorish kingdoms. Castile and Aragon are jealous factions. They are independent and morose. Ferdinand leads Aragon,—Isabella leads Castile. Each is a ruler in their own right,—you know.

CHRISTOPHER.

You think the time is not yet propitious?

PADRE MARCHENA.

Not now, my son,—not now.

CHRISTOPHER (*protesting*).

But I am approaching middle age, Padre. And age overtakes achievement. There is no time to loiter.

(*There is silence for a moment. The two men seem lost in deep thought. At length, PADRE MARCHENA speaks thoughtfully.*)

PADRE MARCHENA.

Thou must wait awhile, my son. Live here a space with me. We shall watch—and pray. Thou shalt extend thy studies.

CHRISTOPHER (*restlessly*).

And then—

PADRE MARCHENA.

I shall prepare a letter commending your project to a man at court of great influence with the sovereigns. Furthermore, I shall foster the education and support of young Diego. Thou shalt leave him in my hands well cared for. When the time is ripe,—thou shalt go thy way unencumbered.

CHRISTOPHER.

How shall I thank you, Padre?

PADRE MARCHENA.

By carrying Christianity to the uttermost parts of thy explorations.

CHRISTOPHER (*fervently*).

In the name of the Holy Virgin and Saint Anthony!

PADRE MARCHENA.

Blessings on thee, son. (*After a moment.*)
The hour is late. I shall prepare thy bed—and in a moment return for thee.

(*He takes a candle to light his way, and exits.*)

CHRISTOPHER *rises—walks to the window—stares out into the night for a moment—then stands with head bowed before the cross, in the spirit of dedication. . . . A vagrant wind blows out the candle-light. Only the pale moonlight illuminates the "cell" as—*

The Curtain Falls.

ACT II.

SCENE 2.

Seven years later;—the council chamber in the royal palace of QUEEN ISABELLA at Cordova, Spain. The walls are hung with gorgeous tapestries. The floor is of small mosaic stones in odd shapes and exquisite colorings. Small tables of black ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl stand here and there. Massive chairs and couches which are draped with gleaming satin are so placed as to face the queen's throne;—an imposing one that reflects the light of gold and precious stones.

(QUEEN ISABELLA is on her throne. She is beautifully gowned; regal, charming. On either side stand three handmaidens who from time to time adjust a bit of lace on her gown here, a ruffle there, etc. Twelve pompous counselors sit about the room at random; some half-reclining on the luxurious couches. They are listening to her gravely.)

QUEEN ISABELLA.

There is another matter of extreme impor-

tance, gentlemen, which we must discuss this morning.

A COUNSELOR.

We await your pleasure, Your Majesty.

QUEEN ISABELLA.

Long have I pondered this matter—and well. Many times a man has appeared before us—petitioning us in the name of the Holy Virgin and Saint Anthony to equip a fleet in which he might wend his way westward across the Atlantic ocean, in quest of a shorter route to Cathay. Know you of whom I speak?

A COUNSELOR.

A man of commanding presence, your Majesty. An Italian by birth—Christopher Columbus. Is it possible that he has come to you again?

QUEEN ISABELLA.

Even so. Upon the final refusal of myself and Ferdinand to sponsor such an expedition, he has quit the country, and I hear, is on his way to France to present his new idea there.

A COUNSELOR.

Your information is reliable, Majesty?

QUEEN ISABELLA.

Yes. I received it from no less a source than Padre Marchena—who is as you all know my personal friend, and a most learned scholar.

A COUNSELOR.

Does the Padre sponsor such an exploration?

QUEEN ISABELLA.

He does—with much enthusiasm. He asks me if we do not realize what an advantage it would be to France should his project prove successful. She would be mistress of the seas!

A COUNSELOR.

But, your Majesty,—the man is mad. He says the earth is round!

QUEEN ISABELLA (*smiling inscrutably*).

Has it never occurred to you, that he may, in sooth, speak the truth?

A COUNSELOR.

He is only a dreamer, your Majesty. I pray you, take no heed of him.

QUEEN ISABELLA.

The great things of the world have all been wrought by dreamers.

A COUNSELOR.

Has the man any terms to offer?

QUEEN ISABELLA.

He has. He goes on condition that he shall be admiral of all the oceans he sails, viceroy of all the lands he discovers, and that he is to have one tenth of all the profits of the expedition—the pearls, diamonds, gold, silver, and spices.

A COUNSELOR.

It is an exorbitant claim, your Majesty.

QUEEN ISABELLA.

I realize that. (*Cunningly*) And yet, if his project should go to France—we, no less, shall be the losers. Let us deliberate.

(*Enter a messenger who speaks in private to the QUEEN. She hesitates a moment, then turns smiling to the counselors.*)

QUEEN ISABELLA.

I have a confession to make, my friends. Upon learning that this man had set forth for France—I dispatched a courier on a swift horse to follow him petitioning him to return to court. He waits without. What is your pleasure?

A COUNSELOR.

It is a rash project, your Majesty. The king has rejected it many times. Think no more of it.

QUEEN ISABELLA.

And yet—

A COUNSELOR.

You have been influenced by the Padre, your Majesty. The plan is not reasonable. Abandon it.

QUEEN ISABELLA (*deliberating*).

For some unknown reason, I have much faith in this man. He is a skilled seaman, and a scholar. His very persistency lends me admiration. (*Coaxingly*) Come, let us send him forth in the name of Spain.

A COUNSELOR (*derisively*).

The Admiral Christopher! Ho! Ho!
(*At this, the QUEEN is quick to take offense. She stands up proudly—head held high—eyes flashing.*)

QUEEN ISABELLA.

How dare you, Sir? (*Regally*) Would you differ with a Queen?

(*She speaks in private to one of her handmaidens who nods comprehendingly and exits. In a few moments, she returns with a large jewel cask of antique gold, overflowing with jewels,—diamond necklaces, ruby pendants,*

emeralds, sapphire pins, etc. She gives the cask to the queen.)

A COUNSELOR (*soothingly*).

We implore your pardon, Majesty. You are deeply set upon sponsoring this project?

QUEEN ISABELLA.

I am. I shall sponsor this man Columbus if I must pledge all my jewels to do so! (*She opens the cask and displays the jewels which sparkle with magnificence.*) See! My jewels are many. A pretty price, indeed, they will bring. (*Slowly, with conviction.*) I am a queen in my own right. I rule the kingdom of Castile. Ferdinand need not enter into this at all. (*Imperiously, to the messenger.*) Bid this man—enter!

(*The messenger exits. In another moment, CHRISTOPHER enters. He kneels before ISABELLA. The COUNSELORS look on with a mingling of anger and distaste.*)

CHRISTOPHER.

Greetings—to Isabella of Castile!

QUEEN ISABELLA.

My friend—arise! (*To the COUNSELORS.*)
Gentlemen—I present Christopher Columbus.

THE COUNSELORS (*rising*).

Greetings, Sir.

QUEEN ISABELLA (*with a note of triumph*).

Let us settle this matter, friends.

A COUNSELOR (*surlily*).

What would you have us do, your Majesty?

QUEEN ISABELLA.

I propose that we draw up a patent creating for Columbus the position of Grand Admiral of the ocean, Viceroy of all the islands and mainland he might discover, and, furthermore, that it shall be hereditary in his family. (*Sweetly*) Have you aught to say?

A COUNSELOR (*in graceless recognition*).

It shall be as you command, Your Majesty.

QUEEN ISABELLA (*artfully*).

Have I commanded?

A COUNSELOR (*shortly*).

You have willed it. Can we do aught but follow?

QUEEN ISABELLA (*graciously*).

Very well. Good morning,—(*Mockingly*) gentlemen.

(*The COUNSELORS file out without a backward look at CHRISTOPHER. The QUEEN and he are alone with her handmaidens.*)

QUEEN ISABELLA (*triumphantly*).

The Admiral Christopher—!

CHRISTOPHER (*overcome with grateful emotion.*)

After three and seven years! My Queen—!
(*He kneels before her. She smiles down upon him.*)

QUEEN ISABELLA.

You may depart, friend. Be sure that I will look after your interests. (*To her handmaidens.*) Bring me my mirror—

(*CHRISTOPHER exits. The QUEEN beautifies herself gracefully . . .*)

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.

The deck of the "Santa Maria"—the flagship of the fleet furnished by QUEEN ISABELLA for CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. A cabin door gives off to the left. It is dusk—October 11, 1492.

(A group of stalwart SAILORS are gathered together talking boisterously among themselves. Their personal appearance has been sadly neglected; their clothing is soiled; their faces are unshaven and unclean; their hair awry,—their expressions sullen. One or two stand near the starboard glaring out over the sea. Another looks through a telescope as though searching far waters. All have the aspect of immediate rebellion.)

A SAILOR (*lamenting*).

Water! Water! Water! For sixty days we've sailed! (*Hotly*) Is that Admiral mad that he keeps ever onward, when even the stars would bid us to turn back?

A SECOND SAILOR.

Did ye notice the strange look o' the stars last night? They were red—red as fire.

A THIRD SAILOR (*as he looks through the telescope*).

There's not a speck o' land in sight.

FIRST SAILOR.

No,—nor is there likely to be. Lost we are between a devil's sky and a monster's deep blue sea. In another day, we'll see the jaws o' death.

FOURTH SAILOR.

Where is the Admiral now?

FIFTH SAILOR.

Asleep within the cabin. It is the first rest he has snatched in forty-eight hours.

FIRST SAILOR (*significantly*).

I hope it is the last.

SIXTH SAILOR (*leaning toward him confidentially*).

Would ye do away with him?

FIRST SAILOR (*in a low voice*).

Aye! And gladly!

SEVENTH SAILOR.

Better would it be than for us all to drown—
or mayhap—worse than drown.

SECOND SAILOR (*quaveringly*).

It's gittin' dark agin.

THIRD SAILOR.

Prepare for more than dark, my fellow.
There'll be a blood red moon tonight,—and blood
will flow on deck.

FIRST SAILOR (*sternly*).

Hush, ye fool! Must ye speak so loud?

THIRD SAILOR (*still at the telescope*).

Ghost-like mists are fallin' on the ocean. The
Pinta's sails have disappeared from sight. The
Nina's prow is scarcely visible.

SECOND SAILOR (*who is younger than the others*).

If that red star appears agin, through the
mist tonight,—I'll clutch it out o' heaven!
(*Viciously*) It drives me wild—that star. It
would scare away the angels.

FOURTH SAILOR (*wildly*).

Ha! Ha! 'This fellow talks o' angels!
When a thousand invisible devils lay bony fingers
to our throats. 'The Admiral must turn back!

FIRST SAILOR.

He will not! I never saw the likes o' his iron will before.

(*A gray, wraith-like mist settles down over the sea. It is eerie—ghostly. The SAILORS hover closer together.*)

THIRD SAILOR.

Hark! There is a roarin' as o' angry waters. The waves are crazy mad tonight.

FIFTH SAILOR (*superstitiously*).

We must beware o' phantom ships. 'Tis said they ride strange seas with death-heads on their masts.

SECOND SAILOR (*dreamily*).

At home they would be kindling hearth-fires now.

FOURTH SAILOR.

Shut up, ye fool! Ye will never see home shores agin.

SECOND SAILOR (*unheeding*).

The kettle would be boilin'. There would be ale in the tankard.

THIRD SAILOR.

Will ye hush? Or shall I hit ye?

SECOND SAILOR (*absently*).

Rosita would be settin' plates upon the table.
Candles would be burnin'. The—

FOURTH SAILOR (*roughly*).

He's gone plumb crazy with home-sickness!
Put him away!

(*They bind him with a rope and thrust him aside.*

*He continues to stare vacantly out through
the mist. The night grows darker.*

FIFTH SAILOR.

It won't be long until we all go mad. The
Admiral must turn back!

FIRST SAILOR.

I tell ye—He Will Not!

THIRD SAILOR (*decisively*).

Let us make him then.

(*There is dead silence for a moment—fraught
with the meaning that the THIRD SAILOR's
words has betrayed the thought of all the
others. . . . Suddenly, a fearful cry is
wring from the lips of the young SAILOR
who is bound. He waves his arms wildly*).

THE SAILOR (*crazily*).

There's that red star again. Red as blood!
Strike it down! Strike it down!

FIRST SAILOR.

Quick! Gag him!

(Several SAILORS gag him. He falls exhausted on the deck. The others huddle closer together.)

FIRST SAILOR (*warily*).

The Admiral sleeps. If we could bind him now—'twould be easy to get rid o' him.

THIRD SAILOR.

Make the rope ready. I'll go stealthy-like into his cabin and see how deep he sleeps.

(The others nod assent. He steals over to the cabin door. He listens a moment; then turns the latch. The others watch breathlessly. At a sound from within—he moves backward quickly. . . . The entire group moves backward. . . . One SAILOR pretends to busy himself with a rope. After another moment of listening—the THIRD SAILOR enters CHRISTOPHER'S cabin—cautiously. . . .)

FIRST SAILOR (*in a loud whisper*).

This will teach the brave Admiral a lesson. Aye, if he lives to learn it. Hush! Our mate returns!

(*Enter the THIRD SAILOR. He speaks in a low voice.*)

THIRD SAILOR.

The Admiral sleeps—and deeply.

FIRST SAILOR.

Bind him then!

(*He takes the rope and re-enters the cabin. The others wait tensely. Through the darkness they appear as dim, phantom figures. . . .*)

FIRST SAILOR (*nervously*).

It's takin' him a long time.

FOURTH SAILOR.

Aye,—'tis a nasty job.

FIFTH SAILOR (*joyfully*).

We'll be a-turnin' back to Spain—early in the mornin'!

(*A moment later the sound of scuffling feet is heard. Enter CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS—eyes blazing—dragging after him the THIRD SAILOR—bound. The others cower before him. He is splendid in his anger.*)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

Cowards! Ye filthy Cowards! All of you! Would you murder me while I sleep?

(*There is no answer.*)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*fiercely*).

Answer me!

FIRST SAILOR (*vindictively*).

Will ye turn back? There is no hope left to us.

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*contemptuously*).

Never!

FOURTH SAILOR (*exhibiting a compass*).

Look, brave Admiral,—even the compass points no longer north. It is swaying to the left. We are going westward. (*Pleadingly*) In the name of all the saints—let us turn back!

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*adamant*).

We are sailing— On! On! On!

(*He goes to the starboard—where he stands arms folded—upright, fearless—watching the horizon. The men stand in awe of him. It is totally dark. There is a long silence. . . . At length the ADMIRAL speaks soothingly as though they were children.*)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

Calm your fears, men. Did you not see birds circling around the ships today? A sailor aboard the Pinta saw a bush with fresh red berries float-

ing by. Another saw a piece of carved wood. Do not all these indicate land?

(They do not answer him. There is another long silence. . . . Suddenly a cry from above is heard. It is from one of the men who had climbed to the mast head.)

THE VOICE.

A light! A light! A light! Land Ho! Land Ho! Land Ho!

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*joyfully*).

Land! Ship-mates, Land! We shall see land at dawn!

(There is a general joyous uprising. The men kneel in prayer. . . . The curtain is lowered to indicate the passage of the night.)

.

(. . . Dawn—over a land in full view of the fleet;—one clad in green verdure and gorgeously hued flowers. Blue waters ripple softly along the shore. Gaily plumaged birds are singing. The sun is shining, enveloping it all in golden haze. . . . It is new and strangely fascinating.)

(Enter the ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER bearing aloft the royal standard with the figure of Christ Crucified. He is arrayed in a scarlet man-

tle which in itself seems to take on an air of triumph. He is followed by the crew of the entire fleet, and the commanders of the Pinta and the Nina. He plants the standard in the ground.)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*kissing the earth*).

We thank thee, Oh, God, for guiding our vessels in safety to this land which was our destination.

(The whole crew kneels in reverence. They sing hymns of praise.)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*rising and drawing his sword*).

I give unto this island the name—San Salvador, in tribute to the Holy Savior. I take possession of it in the name of the good Queen Isabella for her kingdom of Castile.

(The men make the sign of the cross. As they lift their faces skyward—a group of Indians draw near who gaze on them in bewilderment and wonder. One of the Indians carries an oar identical to the one COLUMBUS found cast up on the beach when a boy in Genoa. . . . The scarlet mantle and the drawn swords flash triumphantly in the sun. . . .)

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE 2.

The pleasure-loving city of Barcelona, Spain; on the great day of the discoverer's return. (All is gayety and animation. Beneath a canopy of a cloth of gold are two thrones, on which sit KING FERDINAND and QUEEN ISABELLA, arrayed in regal splendor. A fine Moorish arm chair stands beside them. A descent of seven steps leads to the street on which is a fine runner in the form of a rare Persian rug which extends for a mile or more. Couriers in wonderful costumes with mantles of scarlet, blue, and gold flung from their shoulders surround the thrones. Pages wearing capes of royal purple are hastening to and fro. Six young trumpeters with long silver trumpets stand at attention on either side. Mobs of eager Spaniards line the walk, attired in bright holiday costumes. Coquettish flower venders—girls in gay mantillas are selling flowers,—mostly great bunches of heliotropes—white and purple—which fill the air with an ex-

quisite fragrance. Spirited music is playing—there is the intermittent sound of castanets. Spanish señoritas are dancing before the king.)

QUEEN ISABELLA (*happily, to FERDINAND*).

It is a crowning day for Spain, my husband.

KING FERDINAND (*graciously*).

The credit is all due to your wisdom and foresight, my dear.

QUEEN ISABELLA (*laughing*).

Hereafter, I shall have faith in visions—(*She stops speaking suddenly.*) Hark!

(*The trumpeters blow on their trumpets heralding the procession.*)

THE MOB (*crying wildly*).

They are coming! They are coming!

(*There is the flash of royal banners. The procession enters, led by the ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER. There is glad tumult in the mob. They throw flowers—heliotropes and roses—in his pathway. He is a true conqueror—modest in his demeanor. He is followed by a fantastic parade,—sailors of the fleet bearing strange products of the New World,—trees and shrubs, fruits and*

aromatics, rude golden articles, brilliantly plumaged birds,—and strangest of all—there are several copper-hued Indians with straight black hair—walking wonderingly and being wondered at. As the ADMIRAL approaches the throne, he prepares to kneel, but the sovereigns arise and extend their hands in greeting.)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

We pay thee homage, Oh, Sovereigns, and bring thee tribute from the new lands which we have discovered. We have taken possession of them in the name of the Holy Savior and the King and Queen of Spain!

KING FERDINAND.

You have done well, Admiral Columbus. I commend you, in the name of Aragon and Castile.

QUEEN ISABELLA (*warmly*).

Welcome home, brave Admiral.

KING FERDINAND (*indicating the chair*).

Come, sit here.

(ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER *takes his place beside the king and queen. The mob cheers him wildly.*)

VOICES IN THE MOB.

All honor to the brave Admiral Columbus!
All honor to the king and queen!

QUEEN ISABELLA (*in confidence*).

You shall make other successful voyages, my brave Admiral. Fleets shall be equipped for you. All the maritime service of Spain shall be at your illustrious command.

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

My heart is filled with gratitude. When all this pomp has passed, I shall tell you the details of the voyage.

KING FERDINAND (*rising*).

Hail, my people, to the Admiral Columbus!
Hail—all hail to the great discoverer!

THE MOB (*responding madly*).

Hail to Columbus! Hail to his gallant fleet!
We salute you! We salute you!

(QUEEN ISABELLA *rises and extends her hand to*
CHRISTOPHER. *He stands and bows to the*
acclamations of the people.)

QUEEN ISABELLA (*gesticulating for silence*).

The Admiral will tell us the story of his wanderings.

(The ADMIRAL comes forward. There is a fervor of gladness among the people. Then all is silent with the hush of expectancy. . . .)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

So much there is to tell that days will pass before you know the complete story of our great adventure. Leaving the Canary Islands,—we fared boldly into unknown seas. There were many things to fear. . . . There was much cause to dread. . . . At times it seemed as though the very stars would soon forsake us. We sailed on—and on—and on! Over weary wastes of water. At length, guided by the kindly hand of Providence—we sighted land on the twelfth day of October. And what a land! A veritable Paradise arrayed in verdure. Nature provides cool springs—the soil is rich for cultivation—exploration will reveal treasures of the mine. We landed—claimed it for Isabella—and named it San Salvador. It is a land rich beyond our dreams!

(He is silenced by the cheers of the people. When they subside he continues.)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

Such a land possessed by us will mean a golden age for Spain. Her gallant fleets will make her

mistress of the seas. All the world will follow her! It shall be an age of commerce—of conquest—of glory. An age of great achievement. I believe this land to be a part of Asia—and Asia as magnificent as an entire new world! The natives know aught of Christianity. It will be our sacred privilege to bring to them—the Christ.

(Again he is silenced by the ecstatic madness of the mob.)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER *(when they again subside)*.

Sons and daughters of Spain—we have gained a world! This country, above all other nations, holds it in her power. We have found the way across the trackless seas. The gates of this new world are open. All of us may—enter!

(As the ADMIRAL retires, there is wild acclaim. Military music is played. . . . Enthusiastic madness is rampant as

The Curtain Falls.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*A poorly furnished room in an obscure inn at Seville, Spain.*

(ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER—a pathetic old figure broken by ill health and misfortunes which would seem unbearable—is sitting at a little table. An open book is before him but he is not reading. BARTHOLOMEW, who is now middle-aged, sits opposite him. Both are silent. . . . Only the strumming of a stringed instrument—incongruously playing an old Spanish love song—after the manner of “In Old Madrid”—is heard outside.)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*absently*).

What is that I hear, Bartholomew?

BARTHOLOMEW (*smiling*).

An impetuous lover serenading his lady.

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*mumbling*).

And so the world goes on—

BARTHOLOMEW (*alert*).

What did you say, my brother?

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*unheeding*).

A good queen lives. A world is discovered. The queen dies. (*In a low voice.*) The discoverer is forgotten. (*The music outside grows more insistent. The ADMIRAL listens attentively.*) Youth lives—. And so—the world goes on—

BARTHOLOMEW (*much concerned*).

You are ill, my brother. (*Persuasively*).
Come, rest awhile.

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*dreamily*).

Go, look through the window, Bartholomew. (*Eagerly*) See, if she throws him a rose. (*BARTHOLOMEW, humoring him, goes to the window. The music grows softer.*)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*meditatively*).

But—roses will wither. (*As though remembering old dreams.*) I played for—Spain. I brought her a world! She threw me a rose. (*Very slowly and despondently.*) And—it—is—dead. . . .

BARTHOLOMEW (*alarmed*).

My brother! Oh, I fear for you. You were

the victim of cruel intrigues. But you must forget.

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*dully*).

The rose is dead. . . .

BARTHOLOMEW (*pleadingly*).

Happiness does not lie in the applause of a nation, my brother. The world is fickle and unkind. One must find content in the thought of a deed—well done—a life well spent—. What matters it that Spain has forgotten?

(*The door opens,—a gay señorita enters. She carries a bouquet of vivid red roses. Upon seeing BARTHOLOMEW, she draws back.*)

THE SEÑORITA.

I beg a thousand pardons! I thought the Admiral would be alone.

BARTHOLOMEW.

It is unnecessary, Señorita. I am his brother.

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER.

The Admiral! (*He ponders the name as though he worships it.*) The Admiral!

BARTHOLOMEW.

He is very ill today, Señorita.

THE SEÑORITA.

I came to bring him these flowers. My father chose them from his garden because the Admiral loves roses so.

(BARTHOLOMEW *takes the roses. The girl, understanding, goes out quietly.*)

BARTHOLOMEW (*attempting gayety*).

Look, dear brother! Are they not beautiful?

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*turning away*).

Roses will wither . . .

(*Suddenly, he rises,—goes to an old chest, and finds the seaman's cap he wore on his first voyage of discovery. He puts it on and walks feebly to a mirror.*)

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER (*gazing at his reflection*).

The Admiral—the Admiral— (*Saluting gallantly.*)—the Admiral Christopher!

(*He salutes again with a hint of the old, brave nobility in his gesture. A moment later he sinks down upon the cot and sits staring into space as one in a trance. . . .*

BARTHOLOMEW (*tragically*).

My brother!

(Rose petals drop from the flowers in his hands. He kneels beside CHRISTOPHER. The music grows very faint. At last . . . all is still . . .)

Curtain.

MAYTIME IN PLYMOUTH

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CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Come, my Corinna, and coming, mark,
How each field turns a street, each street a park,
Made green and trimmed with trees, see how
Devotion gives each house a bough,
Or branch; each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn, neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.

Can such delights be in the street

And open fields and we not se'et?

Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey

The proclamation made for May,

And sin no more, as we have done by staying,

But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying!

ROBERT HERRICK.

MAYTIME IN PLYMOUTH

A PLAY IN WHICH THE PILGRIMS GREET THE SPRING AFTER
THE PERILS OF THE FIRST GREAT WINTER

The scene is the little town of Plymouth, New England.

The time is 1621.

CHARACTERS

PRUDENCE, *a little Pilgrim girl.*

HOPE, MARY, CONSTANCE, *her playmates.*

RICHARD, *a Pilgrim boy.*

MARK, ROBERT, DAVID, *his chums.*

JOHN WESTON, *father of Prudence.*

MARIE WESTON, *her mother.*

WILLIAM BRADFORD, *Governor of Plymouth.*

CAPTAIN MILES STANDISH, *Captain of Plymouth.*

PRISCILLA, *maiden of Plymouth.*

GREAT SUN, *the Medicine Man.*

WATTAWAMUT, *Indian Brave.*

SQUANTO, *a friendly Indian.*

PALE MOON, *Princess of the Narragansetts.*

Elders of the church, Townspeople, Indians, etc.

MAYTIME IN PLYMOUTH

ACT I.

SCENE—*A place in the woods just outside the little town of Plymouth, settlement of the Pilgrims in the New World. In the background, through tall forest trees,—pines, oaks, maples, firs, and so on, one can glimpse a bit of the sea, and the masthead of the Mayflower towering above it. A little distance away, to the right, is the high picket fence which surrounds the settlement, built to protect the colonists from hostile Indians. It is accessible only by a stout gate, which at the beginning of the play is open.*

(It is the first day of May. The woods are gay with flowers. Against the bright green of the forest, one or two hawthorn trees are a-flutter with white blossoms. Nearby, boughs of a dogwood tree seem bursting with blooms. Here and there, crocus buds appear in the grass,—daisies, daffodils, marsh marigolds, and Mayflowers grow in abundance. The dew has not yet vanished.

All is a-sparkle in the sun. . . . Drifting out from the town, the sound of a score of voices is heard. Evidently the Pilgrims are at their morning worship. They are singing the hundredth Psalm,—the grand old anthem of their church.)

The Song of the Pilgrims

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his
presence with singing.

Know ye that the Lord, he is God: it is he that
hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are
his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into
his courts with praise: be thankful unto him,
and bless his name.

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;
and his truth endureth to all generations.”

(After the song is sung, there are a few moments of silence,—followed by the entrance of a group of boys and girls,—PRUDENCE, HOPE, MARY, and CONSTANCE;—RICHARD, MARK, ROBERT, and DAVID. They are wearing Pilgrim costumes of gray homespun. The girls wear stiff little white bonnets. All of them appear quite decorous, indeed, with the exception of PRUDENCE, who belying her name, is gay and laughter-loving, with the

dark beauty of a little gypsy. RICHARD, also, is a light-hearted lad much given to merriment.)

PRUDENCE (*indicating the wood*).

Oh, how very pretty! (*She reaches out her arms in a gladsome gesture.*) Look, Richard, at the hawthorn tree. It has burst in blossom overnight!

RICHARD.

And the dogwood too! Scarcely a bud was open yesterday.

PRUDENCE (*kneeling down to gather flowers*).

How sweet the fragrance! (*Caroling joyously.*) Oh, could there be a lovelier, lovelier May day? (*She points to the ship.*) Look, even the mast of the Mayflower is shining in the sun.

MARY.

Let us all gather flowers.

CONSTANCE (*enthusiastically*).

Let's!

PRUDENCE.

And crown the Queen of the May! In England boys and girls are dancing 'round the Maypole now. Do you remember, Mary, last year

we saw them celebrate at Fairy Cross? (*Impetuously*) Oh, 'twould be such fun to dance around the Maypole! (*She is silent for scarcely a moment, in which time she seems to be thinking deeply, then, suddenly her words come breathlessly.*) Oh, do you think we dare?

(*The children stand aghast at the wicked enormity of her proposal. They stare at her wide-eyed and silent. At length CONSTANCE speaks in a hushed voice, almost inspired with awe.*)

CONSTANCE (*remonstrating*).

Prudence, how can you suggest such a thing? Pilgrim children dancing!

HOPE.

The elders of the church would punish us.

RICHARD (*impulsively*).

The elders of the church are graybeards.

MARY (*shocked*).

Richard! Be careful lest even the birds should hear you.

PRUDENCE (*merrily*).

Little birds do sometimes tell!

RICHARD (*winking at her companions*).

Let us take a vote, as the townspeople do upon important matters. If the majority of us want to have a Maypole we boys will bring one from the woods.

PRUDENCE (*clapping her hands*).

Beautiful! And I shall bring the ribbons!

CONSTANCE (*becoming interested*).

Where shall you find them, Prudence? We have no such lovely things in Plymouth.

PRUDENCE (*making a bouquet of her flowers*).

When my mother was a little girl in Canterbury Town, she once was May Queen. A fine old chest she has in which she keeps many treasures. Rare old pewter dishes—a patch of Queen Anne's lace—and in a box all their own—a host of Maypole ribbons in all the colors of the rainbow.

MARY.

How glorious! Oh, sweet it would be to celebrate the May! If only we were not forbidden.

RICHARD (*standing before them like a captain*).

Let us fall in line!

(*The children form a straight line.*)

RICHARD.

Forward! March!

(*They march merrily to the right.*)

RICHARD.

Halt!

(*They cease marching and await his command.*)

RICHARD.

All those who wish to celebrate the May—
step forward!

(*The entire group steps forward, except HOPE.
PRUDENCE pushes her gently.*)

PRUDENCE.

Come, Hope, if you do not, we shall celebrate
without you.

HOPE (*gravely*).

We may bring evil upon the town.

PRUDENCE (*impatiently*).

Nonsense.

RICHARD (*authoritively*).

Silence! (*In a grand manner*). It is so de-
creed that we shall celebrate the May. Swear
you all to secrecy?

(*The children lift their hands as though taking
an oath.*)

ALL.

We swear!

RICHARD.

It is well. (*To the boys.*) Come, comrades, we shall search the woods for a Maypole.

(*The line breaks up in gay confusion. The boys disappear in the woodland. The girls sit down on a fallen log and begin to make a crown from the flowers they have gathered.*)

HOPE.

Are you not afraid, Prudence? A rash thing it is that you have done.

PRUDENCE.

Why must I fear because I love the springtime so? Why, even the winds make music so that the blossoms might dance upon the bough. After the dreadful winter in Plymouth, surely God himself would be pleased to see us making merry.

CONSTANCE.

Prudence! Hush!

PRUDENCE (*laughing*).

How afraid you are! Here, you finish making the crown—and I'll make haste to bring the ribbons.

(PRUDENCE *exits*. *The girls continue making the crown of flowers.*)

MARY.

So gay is Prudence this morning. It is little wonder that Squanto calls her "Laughing Eyes." Let us crown her Queen of the May.

(CONSTANCE *is about to speak when happening to look toward the wood, she screams in sudden fear.*)

CONSTANCE.

Oh! Oh! Look! Standing in the shadow of the hawthorn tree!

(*The girls look in the direction she indicates. They rise in quick alarm. GREAT SUN, the Indian Medicine Man, stands near the hawthorn tree, his eyes fixed upon them. He is horribly painted and wears a crown of eagle feathers. In one hand he carries roots and herbs, in the other, a great writhing snake. He advances toward the girls. They seem rooted to the ground in horror.*)

GREAT SUN (*grunting*).

Ugh! Ugh!

(*At the same moment, footsteps are heard coming through the wood. GREAT SUN kneels down quickly, places his ear to the ground.*

Satisfying himself that someone is advancing, he turns backward and runs fleetly into the wood. The boys return bringing the Maypole. CONSTANCE is standing with HOPE and MARY clinging to her.)

RICHARD.

Here is the finest Maypole in the wood! A tall young birch tree— (*He becomes aware of their fright.*) What has happened? You look much frightened.

MARY (*her voice quivering*).

Did he not pass you by?

THE BOYS (*excitedly*).

Who? Who?

CONSTANCE.

An ugly Indian with a live snake in his hands.

DAVID.

We saw no one.

MARY.

When he heard footsteps in the wood, he disappeared in the opposite direction from which you came.

MARK.

Did he molest you?

CONSTANCE.

He was about to sweep down upon us when he heard your footsteps. Oh, let us go back to the town!

ROBERT.

I do not think he will return now. There are too many of us. Come, let us plant the Maypole.

RICHARD.

Where is Prudence?

MARY.

She has gone to bring the ribbons.

DAVID.

Come, forget your fears. This is a merry morning. Mayhap the Indian meant only to be friendly. Let us not mention it to Prudence. (*Enter PRUDENCE, carrying the Maypole ribbons. When she sees the Maypole, she skips about in delight.*)

PRUDENCE (*gaily*).

See what bright ribbons I have found! Let us attach them to the Maypole.

(*She brings forth a shower of ribbons. The children cluster around the Maypole. They*

attach the ribbons to the top, then plant it in the ground.)

PRUDENCE.

Is it not pretty? Oh, it will be a glorious thing to dance!

DAVID (*nodding to the boys*).

Shall we bring it now?

THE GIRLS (*eagerly*).

What? What?

(*He smiles teasingly.* RICHARD, MARK, and ROBERT *go into the wood, and in a moment return carrying a rude throne made of birch-wood and pine branches.*)

RICHARD.

A throne for the Queen of the May!

THE OTHERS.

Prudence! Prudence! You shall be the May Queen!

RICHARD (*bowing in a courtly fashion*).

Let me assist you to your throne, Fair Lady.
(PRUDENCE *laughingly removes her bonnet; her hair falls over her shoulders. She takes RICHARD'S hand and ascends the throne.*

CONSTANCE *places the crown of flowers on her hair.*)

RICHARD.

Let us dance before the May Queen!

(They take their places around the Maypole, clasp the ribbons in their hands, and proceed to dance merrily. PRUDENCE looks on, laughing, glad. . . . They are not aware that GREAT SUN is stealing up behind the throne. Suddenly PRUDENCE utters a piercing cry. The dancers turn only in time to see him stifle her cries with an Indian robe, and carry her off into the woodland. All in a moment, the Maypole is deserted.)

CONSTANCE *(crying wildly)*.

He has stolen Prudence! What shall we do?
What shall we do?

RICHARD.

Hush! Let us rush to Captain Standish.
Quickly!

(The children flee in terror toward the open gate of Plymouth . . . as

The Curtain Falls.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.

The interior of the home of JOHN and MARIE WESTON in Plymouth. A huge fireplace of rough stone occupies nearly one whole side of the room. There are also a roughly-hewn cupboard, a narrow cot with a mattress of leaves, and a rude shelf for their limited supply of books. A table stands in the center of the room. To the right of the door is an old chest; to the left, a spinning wheel near the window. Suspended from a beam is a little iron cup in which is fish oil and a bit of wick which serves as a lamp when necessary.)

(The door of the log house is open to admit the May sunlight. JOHN WESTON is seated at the table, the Bible open before him. MARIE is at her spinning wheel; her foot on the treadle.)

WESTON (*reading*).

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” (*He closes the book.*) If only all peoples could understand that, Marie. The why, the how, and the where-

fore. Even Plymouth would seem an enchanted place.

MARIE (*affectionately*).

You are a dreamer, John. It was your dreams which brought us all to Plymouth.

WESTON.

Is it not well that we came? Oh, if you were given the choice, would you return to England on the Mayflower?

MARIE (*with spirit*).

Never! (*She glances wistfully out of the window.*) Yonder lies Burial Hill, the last resting place of half of those who came in the Mayflower. Two of our own have been taken, the toll of the cruel northern winter. Oh, there were nights when I lay awake, fearing that the bleakness of forest and ocean would swoop down like a monster upon us. Even then I would not have returned.

WESTON.

You are a woman of courage, Marie. (*Meditatively*) Yes, the winter in this vast country has been like unto the scourge that swept Egypt. Yet, better the lash of the scourge than the lash of the Church of England. Better is freedom

in a desolate land than imprisonment in a land which makes of our faith an insult.

MARIE.

Neither could we have lingered in Leyden. Kind as the Hollanders were, our children were fast absorbing their language and customs. Had we stayed on, we could no longer have claimed them as English children.

WESTON (*smiling*).

Do you remember, Marie, the day that Prudence fell into the dyke at Leyden? And how when they had fished her out she said she was baptizing herself as a Dutchman?

MARIE (*laughing*).

A venturesome child she is,—too merry at times, I fear. (*She rises from her stool and walks to the doorway.*) How sweet the morning, John. As sweet as Maytime in Dover. (*He goes to the doorway and stands beside her.*)

WESTON.

Ah, the perils of winter in Plymouth are over. It is well that our crops are planted, and,—
(*He is interrupted by MARIE who clutches his arm.*)

MARIE.

Look, John! Trouble is brewing! Captain Standish is shouting orders in Leyden Street! And there stands Priscilla Alden with the children clustered around her. (*Excitedly*) Oh, they are coming here!

WESTON.

Calm your fears, Marie. They may bear good news—not evil. Come inside the house and wait for their coming.

(*She follows him in, casting a fearful, backward glance toward the scene in the street. In a few moments, CAPTAIN STANDISH enters, accompanied by PRISCILLA and the boy, RICHARD.*)

WESTON (*pleasantly*).

Good morning, Captain,—and to you,—Priscilla.

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

Good morning, friends. (*Directly*) Is Prudence hereabouts?

WESTON.

No, she joined her companions,—I should say, an hour ago,—when we departed from the church. The boy, Richard here, I believe was among them. Were you not, son?

RICHARD (*paling*).

I was.

CAPTAIN STANDISH (*sorrowfully*).

Prepare for sad news, my friends. There is no time for the mincing and softening of words. Prudence has been stolen, and . . .

MARIE (*crying out*).

Prudence stolen? By whom? Oh, kind Sir, let us search for her quickly.

PRISCILLA (*gently*).

Do not fear, Dame Marie, I beg you. Captain Standish has already issued the orders. A party of men will search for her, and 'tis believed, they have a clue which will make the task easy.

WESTON (*protecting MARIE who is sobbing*).

What clue?

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

Tell them the story, Priscilla.

PRISCILLA.

Have patience with Prudence, I pray you. We must be patient with all the children who have found so few things for which to be merry

in Plymouth. Richard, I'll tell the story, and should I err, you must correct me.

MARIE (*fearfully*).

Tell us at once, Priscilla. Do not spare any details.

PRISCILLA.

This is as Richard has told us. It appears that early this morning, after the service down in the chapel, the children gathered together in the woodland, close by the gate of the town. Seeing the lovely blossoms opened anew for May day, they grew merry, indeed, in their raptures. 'Twas plotted gaily among them, that they should dance 'round a Maypole. Prudence, recalling your youth, Dame Marie, came back to the house and secured from your chest, Maypole ribbons. Look and see if this is not so.
(MARIE *searches the old chest by the window.*)

MARIE.

The Maypole ribbons are gone. They must have been taken ere John and I returned from the service.

PRISCILLA.

While Prudence had gone for the ribbons, and the boys searched the wood for a Maypole, an

Indian appeared whom Captain Standish believes to be the medicine man of the Narragansetts. He approached the three little girls who were making a crown for the May Queen. At that moment, the footsteps of the boys returning were heard, and he at once disappeared in the forest.

WESTON.

The Narragansetts were never friendly toward us.

PRISCILLA.

Prudence returned with the ribbons. The children set up the Maypole, and Prudence was crowned as the May Queen. The boys made a throne of birch-wood and pine branches, and Prudence was settled in state upon it. No sooner had the children begun to dance than Prudence cried out in terror. They turned only in time to see the Medicine Man stifle her cries with his robe—and carry her into the forest—

MARIE (*in horror*).

Oh, he will take her life— (*Wildly*) Captain, you must prevent it. (*She falls in a faint. They carry her to the cot. As they bend over her, the sound of a bugle summoning the men of the town is heard.*)

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

Hark! There is the bugle sounding. We must hasten, Weston, to council. The sooner we go in pursuit of Great Sun—the sooner we shall have Prudence.

WESTON (*commanding his courage*).

I beg you, Priscilla, take care of Marie. Long has she been brave and courageous. Impress upon her that we shall bring Prudence back in safety.

(WESTON goes to the cupboard, takes out his sword and iron scabbard, and fastens it hurriedly round his waist. As the men are about to depart, a soldier of Plymouth enters, forcing PALE MOON, Princess of the Narragansetts, to accompany him.)

THE SOLDIER (*saluting MILES STANDISH*).

Captain, I discovered this maiden, the Princess of the tribe of the Narragansetts, loitering outside the gates of Plymouth.

PALE MOON (*beseeching*).

I meant no harm, good Captain. Strange are the ways of your town—and more strange the ways of the white man. Much do I like to watch them.

CAPTAIN STANDISH (*ignoring her*).

You did well to bring her to me, good soldier. We shall hold her here as a hostage. Should Great Sun not return Prudence—much the Narragansetts will have for which to be sorry. (*Sharply, to the soldier.*) Lodge her now in the prison cell. And guard her well, I instruct you. (*Again, the bugle is heard.*) There is the second summons. Come, Weston, we'll join the council.

(*JOHN follows him slowly, with a backward glance at MARIE, who lies very still with eyes closed.*)

WESTON (*sadly*).

I shall leave her in your care, Priscilla. I beg you, see to her comfort.

PRISCILLA.

Gladly, I will. Go in peace, Sir. (*She curtsies to MILES STANDISH.*) Godspeed, good Captain.

THE MEN.

Farewell!

(*The party departs, leaving only PRISCILLA and RICHARD alone in the house with MARIE.*)

RICHARD (*watching them out of sight*).

Oh, Priscilla! (*Longingly*) Would that I

might go with them. (*Boyishly*) I would kill anyone who hurt Prudence, were I the captain.

PRISCILLA (*comfortingly*).

Be of good cheer, Richard. The Captain is a brave man and daring. Come, bring me a pitcher of water.

(*She turns to DAME MARIE, as—*

The Curtain Falls.

ACT II.

SCENE 2.

The home of the Narragansett Indians deep in the northern woodland. The medicine man's wigwam of birch-bark stands in the shadow of fir and cedar trees, painted with crude figures symbolic of the sun, the moon, and the stars. A rope lies nearby. Suspended from a crooked pole over a low fire hangs an earthen kettle.

(It is dusk. PRUDENCE is sitting wearily in the doorway of the wigwam. Her hair falls over her shoulders in the same manner as when she was May Queen. An Indian squaw sits nearby making moccasins of deer-skin. The medicine man kneels weirdly before the fire, throwing herbs into the kettle, and muttering incantations. PRUDENCE watches him, fearful, yet fascinated by his horror.)

GREAT SUN (*invoking the evil spirits*).

Black water, boil,
Black kettle, sing,
Nightshade and bloodroot,
Great bat's wing.

(He pokes up the fire.)

Burn, fire, burn,
Death-herbs whirling,
Toad stool and bitter-sweet,
Owl's eye, swirling.

Evil Spirits, come,
Hollow and red,
Evil Spirits, fly,
Fly overhead.

(*After the manner of Indian worship, GREAT SUN kneels by the fire, head forward, then sways backward, his face and arms lifted skyward. He repeats this several times, groaning and twisting his body in fervor. Suddenly, he rises and stares at PRUDENCE, as though she seems an apparition.*)

GREAT SUN (*crying wildly*).

Above her are the evil spirits! They hide within her hair. (*To the squaw.*) Fly, old woman,—fly!

(*The squaw hurries away in terror. PRUDENCE cowers down stricken with horror. GREAT SUN dances around her.*)

GREAT SUN.

You, Pale Face, are marked for death! Evil Spirits hover 'round you! You must be sacrificed!

(*He seizes a rope from the ground, captures PRUDENCE, and ties her to a tree. During this procedure, a beating as of drums is heard in the distance. Presently, the chief-tain of the Narragansetts enters, followed by the old men of the tribe, and the young braves. SQUANTO, a visiting Indian, stalks beside him. Upon seeing SQUANTO, PRUDENCE cries out to him.*)

PRUDENCE (*eagerly*).

Squanto! Squanto! Here am I! Prudence!

(*SQUANTO hastens toward her.*)

SQUANTO.

Do not fear, little Laughing Eyes. Squanto will take you from this place.

(*The Indians seat themselves in a semi-circle round the fire. The medicine man sits beside the chief.*)

THE CHIEF.

Bring the pale face child before me!

GREAT SUN (*interfering*).

It is not good to do so. Evil spirits hover 'round her. She will bring evil, too, upon you.

THE CHIEF.

Let her remain. Great Sun is wiser. (To SQUANTO.) What is your story, friend?

SQUANTO.

I would plead the child's release, great chieftain. Much harm will the white man do you, when he learns that this has happened. Tramping southward from the river on my way to Massasoit, I heard the scream of one in terror. Intruding on your lands and forests, I discovered Great Sun bearing the little pale face northward.

THE CHIEF.

How came you by her, Great Sun?

GREAT SUN.

I stole her from the white man's village. Last night I dreamed the evil spirits demanded of our tribe an offering. (*Weirdly*) Suddenly in my dream there appeared before me, a child like her with hair a-flying. So I sought her out this morning, sought her in the white man's woodland. I knew her when I came upon her, for the gods had given me vision.

THE CHIEF.

The medicine man's dreams are holy, Squanto. We cannot rebel against them.

A BRAVE (*hotly*).

Even had not Great Sun dreamed it, much we need to hurt the white man. Yesterday we challenged them to warfare. Sent a snake-skin filled with arrows. How did the Captain receive it? (*Defiantly*) Bah! He scattered all the arrows, and filled the skin with powder and bullets, fiercely saying to our warrior, "Here, take it! This is your answer!"

SECOND BRAVE.

By and by they'll steal our forests. Steal our land and prey upon us. We must conquer them, great chieftain.

SQUANTO (*pleading*).

My good chief Massasoit lives in peace with all the white men. Treat them well and they will live with you as brothers. Come, let me take the white child homeward.

THE BRAVES (*warningly*).

She is ours! Squanto—you must not!

GREAT SUN (*peering into the kettle*).

The spirits all cry out against it!

THE CHIEF (*finally*).

You cannot take the child, friend Squanto. Great Sun and the tribe decree against it.

SQUANTO (*stolidly*).

You will regret it, Mighty Chieftain.

(*He turns without a backward glance and proudly trudges off into the forest. The chief rises solemnly and is followed out by the tribe. The medicine man sits mysteriously near the kettle. PRUDENCE buries her face in her hands.*)

GREAT SUN (*chanting*).

Black water, boil,
Black kettle, sing,
Nightshade and blood-root,
Great bat's wing.

Burn, fire, burn,
Death-herbs whirling,
Toad-stool and bitter-sweet,
Owl's eye, swirling.

Evil Spirits, come,
Hollow and red—

(*Suddenly an arrow comes sailing toward GREAT SUN and pierces his heart. Without a sound, he keels over. Very stealthily, SQUANTO enters. Furtively, he releases PRUDENCE.*)

SQUANTO (*touching his lips*).

Silence! Come, Little Laughing Eyes—
(*They steal away into the darkness of the forest.*),

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE—*Leyden Street, Plymouth,—three days later. A large crowd is assembled before the meeting house.*

(GOVERNOR BRADFORD stands on the steps of the meeting house addressing the people.)

GOVERNOR BRADFORD.

Friends, we are gathered together to discuss a grave situation. Many things have been strange since the Mayflower sailed into Plymouth, but nothing so heart-breaking as this,—the stealing away of our children. Three days has the captain been gone in search of little Prudence. No news have we heard, or good tidings, so let us consider together. Shall we who are left make warfare? Or shall we wait longer with patience?

A VOICE IN THE CROWD.

Let us take the life of Pale Moon, the princess. A life for a life, I say,—even though it be sinful.

PRISCILLA (*compassionately*).

Good Governor, do not take the life of Pale

Moon, I pray you. Must we be barbaric even before we are certain that death has befallen Prudence? Pale Moon, too, is a child. She has done us no evil.

THE ELDER OF PLYMOUTH.

My children, Priscilla is just. Let us wait one more day and be patient.

A SECOND VOICE IN THE CROWD.

Dame Marie lies sick unto death. Can we not in some way avenge her?

PRISCILLA.

Look! The guards are opening the gate of Plymouth! (*Eagerly*) Oh, here comes the great Captain Standish!

(*There is confusion in the crowd.* CAPTAIN STANDISH *enters, dejectedly followed by his little band of soldiers.*)

PRISCILLA.

Oh, Prudence is not among them!

GOVERNOR BRADFORD.

Welcome, good Captain Standish. Tell us, what success have you met with?

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

None, Governor Bradford. For miles and miles have we scoured the forest. I am certain

it was Great Sun, the medicine man of the Narragansetts, who captured Prudence. We raided their Indian village, only to find the wigwams destroyed and not a sign of life to be found there. They have stolen away in the night leaving no traces behind them. (*Fiercely*) One trophy, though, have I brought,—the head of a Narragansett warrior! (*He takes the head of an Indian brave from his bag of deerskin.*) I found him slinking around the gates of Plymouth. There! Put it aloft on the pole,—let them see what they will come to!

(*Soldiers place the head on a high pole. PRISCILLA averts her face in horror. The people are exultant in their praise of the captain.*)

THE PEOPLE.

Great is our Captain Standish! He will be sure to avenge us!

CAPTAIN STANDISH (*his voice booming*).

Now bring this Narragansett princess before me!

(*A soldier goes to bring PALE MOON. The people crowd around the captain.*)

GOVERNOR BRADFORD.

Look! The gates are opening again! The guards are hastening toward us!

*(The crowd looks eagerly toward the gate.
PRUDENCE rushes in followed by SQUANTO.)*

THE CROWD.

Prudence! Look, it is Prudence!
(Her father hastens to greet her.)

PRUDENCE *(rushing into his arms)*.

Father! Oh, how glad I am to see you!
Squanto has saved my life, and brought me back
here in safety.

*(The crowd surrounds them. CAPTAIN STAND-
ISH places his hand on SQUANTO'S shoulder.)*

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

Noble indeed have you been. How can we
ever repay you? Where found you Prudence
and how?

SQUANTO.

With the tribe of the Narragansetts.

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

When we reached their village, we found it
deserted and fallen in ruins.

SQUANTO.

I slew the medicine man in their village.
Soon they would hasten to burn it, fearing his
spirit would come back to haunt them.

(*A soldier stands before CAPTAIN STANDISH. PALE MOON is beside him.*)

THE SOLDIER.

Here is the princess, Sir. I pray you, what shall be done with her?

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

Since Squanto has rescued Prudence, no harm shall befall Pale Moon. But what shall we do—her tribe has deserted their village. To whom shall she return?

SQUANTO.

Give her to me, Captain Standish. I will find her people, and see that she reaches her new home in safety.

CAPTAIN STANDISH.

You may have her—and welcome—Squanto.

PRUDENCE (*taking her father's hand.*)

Come, let us hurry to mother!

(*They go out together. CAPTAIN STANDISH'S sword slips from its scabbard and falls to the ground. PRISCILLA is standing nearest to him. She looks down at it wonderingly, then stoops and picks it up. There is blood dripping from it.*)

PRISCILLA (*in horror*).

Blood! (*Softly, with longing.*) Ah! Dear old England! (*She looks down at the sword again.*) Ah! There is blood in Plymouth—in Maytime!

Curtain.

RED DUSK

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THE WHITE MAN'S FOOT

“Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like;
I beheld our nation scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other.
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of Autumn!
—From “The Song of Hiawatha”
by H. W. LONGFELLOW.

RED DUSK

AN INDIAN FANTASY IN WHICH "KING PHILIP," CHIEF OF THE WAMPANOAGS, MIGHTY TRIBE OF THE EAST, "GOES WEST."

The scene is Mt. Hope on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island,—rendezvous of King Philip during the Indian war.

The time is 1676.

CHARACTERS

KING PHILIP, *son of the good chief Massasoit.*

BRIGHT EAGLE, *the boy singer and musician of the tribe.*

FLYING ARROW, *an Indian traitor.*

CAPTAIN BENJAMIN CHURCH, *Captain of Plymouth.*

Indian warriors, soldier-colonists, etc.

THE PHANTOMS

MASSASOIT, *King Philip's father.*

ALEXANDER, *his brother.*

WETAMOO, *Alexander's wife.*

FLOWER-O'-THE-MORNING, *King Philip's wife.*

LIGHT HEART, *King Philip's son.*

RED DUSK

SCENE—*A place in the woods near Mt. Hope—sheltered to the right by a hill overgrown with trees and shrubs; to the left, a ravine, where huge rocks form a nook akin to a natural encampment. Clear water flows from a spring into a narrow creek which winds into Narragansett Bay in the distance.*
(*It is autumn,—the forest is ablaze with color, scarlet of sumac, gold of oak, russet of maple. KING PHILIP lies on a bed of rushes, near a hastily improvised wigwam. He is asleep. Now and then he tosses restless—muttering, as in a dream. BRIGHT EAGLE reclines not far from the spring. He is a mere boy with a voice singularly sweet. Intermittently, he plays on a flute of hollow reeds, music unbelievably beautiful; or sings fragments of Indian melodies. Other warriors sit nearby, smoking silently, listening. . . . Now and then can be heard the cautious tread of Indian sentinels guard-*

ing the camp. It is nearing the hour of sunset.)

BRIGHT EAGLE (*chanting melodiously*).

Came the autumn . . . bright-hued . . . haunting,
ing,

As a brave—his feathers flaunting,

Daubs upon his face the war paint.

Came the autumn . . . leaves a-whirling,

In colored eddies—swirling, swirling,

On the fields, the hills, and waters.

Crimson-clad each bush and berry,

Crimson-clad the earth makes merry!

A WARRIOR (*glancing at KING PHILIP significantly*).

Came the autumn . . . dying . . . dying . . .

Like a chieftain's time a-flying

To the land of the hereafter!

(KING PHILIP *turns on his cot and cries out in a dream.*)

KING PHILIP (*muttering wrathfully*).

I can see it! I can see it!

The mighty Indian's course is run. . . .

I see a trail—he's moving westward!

Toward the setting o' the sun!

BRIGHT EAGLE (*anxiously*).

He dreams!

A WARRIOR.

And utters prophecies! He has begun—

KING PHILIP (*tossing, moaning*).

. . . he's moving westward!

Toward the setting o' the sun!

THE WARRIOR (*continuing*).

He has begun

To fear the white man . . .

A wild animal at bay,

He makes of life

A hunted thing.

BRIGHT EAGLE (*warningly*).

He wakes!

THE WARRIOR.

And waking makes

The fast departing day

Wear a blood-red ring . . .

You'll see—I know his moods.

A SECOND WARRIOR.

Of King Philip's moods—

Beware!

His wars have made of all the East

A wanton massacre.

He's rising! Play! Bright Eagle,—play!

BRIGHT EAGLE (*playing soft music*).

I play—

Song-of-the-Red-Bird-Flies,
To the lengthening shadows
Of the day.

KING PHILIP (*sitting on his cot*).

Bring me my belt of wampum,
Bring me my powder horn,
Bring me my bundle of arrows,
Sheathed in a husk of corn.

(*Fiercely, half in anger.*)

Then leave me alone with Bright Eagle,
Each go to your separate task,
I am weary of blood and warfare,
Peace—for the night—I ask.

(*One Indian hastens to do his bidding. The others file out silently, looking somewhat askance at him.*)

KING PHILIP (*muttering*).

Westward moves the sun at evening,
Another little day is done,
What is this vision come to haunt me,
At the setting o' the sun?

(*Wildly.*)

I can see it! I can see it!
Death to the accursèd race!

Come to steal the red man's country,
Pursue him, as mad dogs the chase.
Many moons will come and vanish,
Day to night and night to day,
None will see the red man's footsteps,
None will hear the good chief say—
"Come, my children, live as brothers,
War cannot increase your hold,
Smoke your peace pipes with the white men,
Hunger not for land and gold!"

(He laughs madly.)

Ha! Ha! So they fooled Massasoit,
So they lied to Squanto, son, *(contemptuously)*
Thieves, they are, who pray with one hand,
And with the other—shoot the gun!

(His voice rises almost to frenzy.)

I can see it! I can see it!

The mighty Indian's course is run. . . .
I see a trail . . . he's moving westward!
Toward the setting o' the sun!
. . . A trail that ends in purple shadow,
Lost to earth—as day when done, *(Sadly)*
Oh, my tribes! Scattered . . . departing . . .
With the setting o' the sun!

*(The INDIAN returns with KING PHILIP's belt
of wampum, etc. As the chieftain dons the
belt, he stands before him, hesitates a mo-
ment, then speaks.)*

THE INDIAN (*fearfully*).

King Philip, stay not here, I pray you,

Strange is the ancient wood tonight,

I see a prairie fire eastward,

The sun glows with a crimson light!

(KING PHILIP *rises in sudden anger; glares at the Indian a moment, then sends an arrow to his heart. He falls dead. KING PHILIP calls to the guards. BRIGHT EAGLE looks on in horror.*)

KING PHILIP (*crully, to the guards*).

Go! Make his a mound in the forest,

And put up a high totem pole,

Inscribing the name—"Yellow Feather"

. . . May the spirits torment his soul!

(*As the guards carry him out, FLYING ARROW enters. He bends over the dead INDIAN.*)

FLYING ARROW (*lamenting*).

Oh, my brother! Oh, my brother!

Gone you are from earth and light,

Rest in peace—I will avenge you,

Ere the morn betrays the night!

(*Crazed with grief, he rushes sobbing into the forest. KING PHILIP laughs . . . a cruel, mirthless laugh . . .*)

BRIGHT EAGLE (*anxiously*).

Are you not fearful, great Chieftain?

Flying Arrow is cunning and fleet,
He may betray our haunt to the white man,
Death will surely follow defeat.

(KING PHILIP *answers him kindly. It is evident that he holds a warm affection for the boy.*)

KING PHILIP.

There are many paths through the forest,

None will he find that will lead
To the village of lying white men,
“No Indian shall pass,”—is their creed.

(*He is silent for a moment; his manner apparently softened. There is a note of wistfulness in his next words.*)

KING PHILIP.

Come, sing me your songs, Bright Eagle,
Son of Fire-on-the-Mountain-Gleams,
Let me sit here lost in the shadow,
. . . An old man remembering—dreams.

BRIGHT EAGLE.

I will sing you songs, Oh, Chieftain,
Of days as they used to be,
When the tribes roamed hills and valleys,
Gods of the forest and sea!

KING PHILIP (*shivering*).

The night grows cold . . .

BRIGHT EAGLE.

The day is old . . .

KING PHILIP.

Aye, call the braves,
To gather fire-wood.

BRIGHT EAGLE.

As the little owlet calls,
In the darkness of the forest.

(BRIGHT EAGLE *cups his hands over his mouth and makes a series of sounds like the hooting of an owl. A group of Indians seem to appear simultaneously.*)

KING PHILIP (*with authority*).

The evening's chill,
Go bring us fire-wood
From the hill.

(*They depart in silence . . . and in a few moments return bearing the wood. After the Indian manner of kindling fire, they rub two dry sticks together. As the flame rises skyward, they chant.*)

Song of the Fire Makers.

We are the fire makers,
Burn, red fire, burn,
Oh, sweet-smelling fagots,
Grow warm and bright.

We are the fire makers,
Burn, red fire, burn,
Pine cones and cedar boughs,
Grow warm and bright.

We are the fire makers,
Praise be to Manito,
Who maketh the fire-wood,
Grow warm and bright!

(When the fire burns brightly, the braves depart.

*KING PHILIP sits silently watching the
flames. BRIGHT EAGLE meditates a mo-
ment . . . then chants softly in a voice low
and musical.)*

BRIGHT EAGLE.

Came the chieftain forward . . . greeting,
White men at their council meeting,
In the forest 'neath the pine trees.
Friendly was his face . . . and beaming,
With a love in his eyes gleaming,
He said, "We will live as brothers!"
Sweet was his welcome in the spring,
Sweet was the friendship he did bring.

(Enters the phantom of the good chief MASSASOIT. He stands a little way apart from the fire, arms folded, eyes looking away to the distance.)

KING PHILIP *(excitedly)*.

'Tis the good chief . . . Massasoit!
Here again he comes to greet us!
Oh, my father . . . aid thy people!

MASSASOIT *(mournfully, pointing west)*.

See—our tribes move to the westward,
With the setting o' the sun!

BRIGHT EAGLE.

Came a warrior—eldest son,
When Massasoit's time was done,
With not so benign a bearing.
Trouble had he with the white man,
Suspicious were they of his plan,
His plotting with the Narragansetts!
Cruel was his capture, cruel indeed,
Cruel was the white man, without heed.
(Enter ALEXANDER, his hands bound, head bent forward.)

KING PHILIP *(lamenting)*.

Oh, my brother! My poor brother!
Victim of the white man's greed,
Vainly do we seek thy vengeance!

ALEXANDER (*muttering*).

My poor tribes. . . Scattered . . . departing,
With the setting o' the sun!

(*He joins MASSASOIT.*)

BRIGHT EAGLE.

Came an Indian maid . . . a queen,
Of many tribes and lands, I ween,
She was rich beyond our dreaming!
Dark were her eyes; black hair shining
Like the dusk on pines reclining
When the storm clouds sweep the forest.
Loved she Alexander truly,
Hated she the white man surely!

(*Enter WETAMOO, wife of ALEXANDER. She wears many ornaments of shells and feathers. Three squaws hover in attendance about her. One carries her robe of deer-skin; another her beaded moccasins; a third, her comb of shell.*)

KING PHILIP (*calling*).

Ah, Wetamoo! Fair Indian queen!
Passing onward in a dream,
Come back again! Oh, aid thy people!

WETAMOO.

I can see the white hordes creeping,
Like a river ever sweeping,

Red men toward the setting sun!

(*She joins ALEXANDER and MASSASOIT.*)

BRIGHT EAGLE (*softly*).

Another came . . . lovely as dawn,
Laughter-loving . . . lingering on,
In the wigwam of King Philip.
Flower-of-the-Morning . . . singing,
Like a blue-bird southward winging
In the dreary moon of snow-shoes.
Crushed the white man her sweet song,
Made her captive . . . (*Hopelessly*) long. . . .
Long. . . .

(*Enter FLOWER-OF-THE-MORNING, an Indian maid,—youthful, beautiful. She holds out her arms to KING PHILIP in a gesture of supreme sadness.*)

KING PHILIP (*heart-broken*).

Flower-of-the-Morning . . . always
Am I yearning . . . yearning for you . . .
My own princess! My Beloved!

FLOWER-OF-THE-MORNING.

My way, too, is winding westward,
To the setting o' the sun!
(*Sorrowfully she joins the others.*)

BRIGHT EAGLE.

Came the blossom of this wedlock . . .

Little Light-Heart . . . joyous . . . dancing . . .
As a leaf upon the river.
Son of princess and warrior bold,
Heart of their heart, prince foretold,
Of an ancient tribe and people!
Stolen by the white man, severed,
Severed from our hearts—forever . . .
(*Enter LIGHT-HEART, a small child, bewildered,
afraid.*)

KING PHILIP (*longingly*).

Light Heart! Light Heart! Little son!
Come back—come back! There is none
In our hearts can e'er replace thee!
(*As LIGHT HEART turns to pass out, FLOWER-
OF-THE-MORNING sings to him an Indian
lullaby, to the music of "Sweet and Low."*)

Song of Flower-of-the-Morning.

Light Heart Mine! Light Heart Mine!
Child of the Indian moon,
Come—come—once more come,
Back to my arms and croon,
Little laughing pa-poose mine,
Child of king and warrior fine,
Come back again to me!
While I sing to you,
While I sing to you,
Come!

Light Heart Mine! Light Heart Mine!
Child of the Indian moon,
Heart—heart—of my heart,
Listen to mother croon.
I will tuck you in tonight,
Under the shining stars so bright,
Under the Indian moon . . .
Come, my little one,
Come, my little one,
Come!

(*With an eager gesture, LIGHT HEART rushes to FLOWER-OF-THE-MORNING. She departs with him, singing.*)

KING PHILIP (*dreamily*).

Hark! Flower-of-the-Morning sings,
To our little boy child sings,
Lullabies of little children.

BRIGHT EAGLE.

Captured were they by the white man,
Sold as slaves to a cruel, far clan,
In Bermuda . . . isle of the sea.
For them life holds no sweet meaning,
For them no bright star is gleaming,
Silver rays to light their pathway.
Yearn they ever for King Philip!
Cry they ever for King Philip!
(FLOWER-OF-THE-MORNING *re-enters with*

LIGHT HEART. *They are carrying heavy burdens.)*

KING PHILIP.

Oh, that harm should come to greet you,
Oh, that death should come to greet you,
In a land I never knew!

(He kneels by the side of the cot in grief. The entire company passes out sorrowfully).

BRIGHT EAGLE.

So they pass—the red man's clan,
Wending west—a caravan . . .
Robbed of all its ancient glory.
Seek they now the Gates of Morning,
Seek they now the Call of Morning,
To the new land of their dreaming.
Westward go they with the sun,
Westward with the setting sun.

(The fire burns low. KING PHILIP kneels immovable. BRIGHT EAGLE stares mournfully into the darkness of the forest. Suddenly, a triumphant war cry is heard. Enter FLYING ARROW, followed by CAPTAIN BENJAMIN CHURCH and soldiers of Plymouth. KING PHILIP stares at him a moment unbelievably; then gives signs of a quick retreat.)

FLYING ARROW (*triumphantly*).

Oh, my brother,—I avenge you,
See,—I have betrayed King Philip,
To the captain of the white men!

CAPTAIN CHURCH.

Philip! King of all the red men,
Monarch of the fields and forests,
Death has come at last to greet you!

(*KING PHILIP makes a final struggle to elude them. They pounce gleefully upon him and force him out. They do not molest BRIGHT EAGLE. There is silence in the camp. Triumphant war cries are heard in the distance. At length, victorious voices are heard calling.*)

THE VOICES.

King Philip is dead! King Philip is dead!
End of warfare—Peace to Plymouth!

(*After a moment, the mournful sound of the beating of Indian drums is heard . . . slow, rhythmical, akin to the music of tom toms. . . . Enter two rows of armed soldiers led by CAPTAIN CHURCH who brandishes a sword. Another soldier carries a pole set aloft with KING PHILIP'S head. Captive Indians march, hands bound, between them.*

The white men are uttering mad cries of triumph. . . . BRIGHT EAGLE is left alone amid the ruins of the camp.)

BRIGHT EAGLE (*throwing aside his flute*).

So they pass—the red man's clan,
Wending west—a caravan . . .
Robbed of all its ancient glory.
Seek they now the Gates of Morning,
Seek they now the Call of Morning,
As they journey to—Hereafter.
(*He reclines mournfully beside the dying ashes of the fire.*)

BRIGHT EAGLE (*in a terror stricken voice*).

. . . A trail that ends in purple shadow,
Lost to earth—as day when done,
Our dear tribes! Scattered! Departing . . .
With the setting o' the sun!
(*The fire burns out. . . . Unsuccessfully he stirs the dead ashes. . . . Only the mournful beat of the drums is heard in the distance . . .*)

Curtain.

YOUNG HALE OF CONNECTICUT

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YOUNG HALE OF CONNECTICUT

A PLAY OF THE COURAGE AND DARING OF CAPTAIN NATHAN
HALE

*The scene is in the city of New York in the early days
of the Revolution.*

The time is 1776.

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CHARACTERS

GEORGIA, ROSAMOND, RICHARD, *the three Vandercourt children.*

ANNABEL VANDERCOURT, *their mother, a leader in New York society.*

CARL VANDERCOURT, *their father—a wealthy ship owner and merchant.*

CAPTAIN ROBIN, *Captain of the “Annabel.”*

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, *leader of the Continental Army.*

CAPTAIN NATHAN HALE, *a brave young patriot.*

MARIAN, *his sister.*

MRS. HALE, *his mother.*

UNCLE TOBY, *A Negro, Slave—an old family servant.*

HANS, *the Town Watchman.*

BRITISH OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS, *guests at Rosamond’s party, etc.*

YOUNG HALE OF CONNECTICUT

ACT I.

SCENE—*The drawing room in the Vandercourt mansion, New York City. It is spacious and luxuriously appointed with furniture brought from the Old World. There are a harpsichord, a Queen Anne table, a fine old French clock, a divan, and several chairs, gracefully designed after the manner of Louis XV. A fire burns in a huge stone fireplace which occupies almost one entire end of the room. In the background is a window with a wide window seat heaped with bright silken pillows. The silken curtains are drawn so that one may command a view of the narrow street and New York harbor in the distance. Dim shadows of ships plough back and forth in the harbor. Great pots of colorful tulips in bloom are placed here and there about the room. Candles are burning in Dutch silver holders.*

(It is nearing nine o'clock of an evening in early September. GEORGIA, ROSAMOND, and RICHARD are cozily established on the win-

dow seat in the drawing room. They are in "Party" attire; quaint colonial costumes of rich materials. GEORGIA'S dress is as pink as a moss rose; ROSAMOND'S as yellow as a daffodil. RICHARD wears a blue velvet waistcoat and long silk hose.)

GEORGIA.

Mother is so sweet to permit us to stay up late to meet her guests tonight. She is holding a surprise for us, I am sure.

ROSAMOND.

The guests must be very important persons, indeed. Why, the servants are working as though 'tis Christmas! Old Aunt 'Liza baked mince-meat pies this noon—fruit cakes teeming with nuts and spices—and Uncle Toby killed the fattest turkey in the barnyard.

RICHARD (*merrily*).

The patriot army must be coming to dine with us! (*Proudly*) Mother is very popular with the soldiers. She gives more time and money than anyone in all New York.

GEORGIA.

I heard Uncle Toby say she sent a hundred bushel of apples to their encampment on Harlem

Heights last night. A hundred bushels! Fancy that!

ROSAMOND (*peering out through the window*).

Hark! The watchman's coming!

GEORGIA.

Let us wave to him!

(*The town watchman is seen nearing the window. He wears a three cornered hat, a long black coat; carries a staff and a lantern. He calls out in a sing-song voice.*)

THE TOWN WATCHMAN.

Nine o'clock and all is well!

Nine o'clock and all is well!

RICHARD.

He is beckoning to us! Open the window! Perhaps he has good news!

(*ROSAMOND opens the window. The town watchman pokes his head in merrily.*)

THE TOWN WATCHMAN.

'Tis past the sandman's hour, little folks. To bed with you!

GEORGIA (*laughing*).

Not tonight, old friend, not tonight! See, we

are all dressed for the party. What news have you for us?

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*smiling craftily*).

And what may I have—to tell?

RICHARD (*promptly*).

A glass of wine and three red apples!

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*solemnly*).

The bargain's made!

ROSAMOND.

I'll ring for Uncle Toby.

(*A rope of twisted silk hangs near the doorway.
She pulls it three times. A bell rings.*)

GEORGIA (*eagerly*).

Is it news of the patriot army camped on Harlem Heights?

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*teasingly*).

No,—all is quiet along the lines tonight.

RICHARD.

Have more troops come down from Boston?

THE TOWN WATCHMAN.

Ho! Ho! The troops had better stay in Bos-

ton, lad, or the redcoats will try to close the port again!

GEORGIA.

Let them dare! Rank rebels live in Boston and all the colonies stand behind them. Cousin Nathan was there the night of the Boston Tea Party,—and how he laughed when he told us how the sea drank up the tea!

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*winking*).

Now—you are getting warmer, little friends?

ROSAMOND (*joyously*).

Is Cousin Nathan in New York? Truly?

RICHARD (*enthused*).

Oh, tell us! Tell us!

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*relenting*).

Aye, my little friends. Captain Nathan Hale is stationed on Harlem Heights tonight.

GEORGIA (*clapping her hands*).

How glorious! Oh, I know he will come to see us the first free moment that he has!

RICHARD (*in great anticipation*).

Maybe tonight! And he promised me a sword!

ROSAMOND.

We must tell mother!

(*Enter* UNCLE TOBY, a genuine "Uncle Tom" sort of negro servant.)

UNCLE TOBY.

Yo' called me, chilun?

ROSAMOND.

Yes, Uncle Toby. Please bring wine and apples for our friend the town watchman here. He is bringing us great news tonight. (UNCLE TOBY *exits*.)

THE TOWN WATCHMAN.

I have more news, my friends.

THE CHILDREN (*dancing around*).

Tell us! Tell us!

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*slyly*).

The good ship "Annabel" is back in port!

RICHARD (*excitedly*).

Father's favorite ship! Back from Spain and the West Indies!

GEORGIA (*happily*).

A rich cargo she will bring from Spain, I know. Father promised me a Spanish doll. They

are so cunning, don't you remember, Rosamond? Dashing black-haired little señoritas with gay mantillas of silver lace.

ROSAMOND (*dreamily*).

And we'll soon see Captain Robin! He promised to bring me silver slipper buckles from his next voyage!

(UNCLE TOBY returns bearing a glass of wine on a silver tray, and several apples. ROSAMOND serves it to the TOWN WATCHMAN who drinks it with relish. He pockets the apples.)

THE TOWN WATCHMAN (*smacking his lips*).

Fine old Madeira wine! Ah! The Vandercourts are good! But I must hasten on. 'Tis many minutes I have loitered here. Goodnight, my friends! Goodnight!

THE CHILDREN (*merrily*).

Goodnight! Goodnight!

(*He moves slowly down the street; eating an apple with one hand and swinging his lantern with the other. The children resume their places on the window seat, much excited.*)

GEORGIA.

I'll wager mother has arranged a lovely party for tonight. She is known for doing all she does

so graciously. Hush! She is coming down the stairway. Let us surprise her with the news.

(*Enter MR. and MRS. VANDERCOURT. She is charming in a quaint colonial gown; MR. VANDERCOURT is a dominant figure in a velvet suit trimmed with silver lace, powdered wig and long silk hose. The children rush to greet them.*)

GEORGIA.

Mother! Mother! Come sit here with us! We have great good news to tell!

RICHARD (*impetuously*).

Cousin Nathan is in town; and the "Annabel's" in port!

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*laughing*).

What tales! What tales these children tell! (*She winks at MR. VANDERCOURT.*) Fancy that, Carl,—they tell us our own secrets! Who told you, my dears?

MR. VANDERCOURT (*good naturedly*)¹.

Uncle Toby let it slip, I'll wager!

THE CHILDREN (*merrily*).

No! No! Uncle Toby told us nothing!

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

Then surely you heard my maid chattering with the kitchen servants.

ROSAMOND.

We heard no chatter, mother.

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*playfully bewildered*).

What then? You did not walk abroad today?

GEORGIA.

No. We rode through the park in father's carriage. (*Confidentially*) I will tell you, mother. The Town Watchman told us on his way through the streets tonight.

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

That sly old fellow!

MR. VANDERCOURT (*humorously*).

There is no greater gossip in little old New York!

ROSAMOND (*eagerly*).

Tell us, mother,—will Cousin Nathan come to visit us?

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

Very soon, I hope, my dear. Marian and his mother are scheduled to arrive this evening.

ROSAMOND (*enthusiastically*).

Splendid! Marian and Aunt Polly. How long shall they stay?

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

Several weeks, we hope. (*She rises.*) One moment, dear, I think I hear guests arriving now. (UNCLE TOBY *appears in the doorway. He announces the names of the guests with dignity.*)

UNCLE TOBY.

Mrs. Hale and Miss Marian!
(*Enter* MRS. HALE and MARIAN. *The children curtsy to them; the older VANDERCOURTS greet them cordially.*)

ROSAMOND (*embracing Marian*).

Oh, I am so glad you have come! Just think of all the lovely things we can do! And, Aunt Polly, I have learned all those difficult new stitches you taught me when you were here last! I have made three sweaters for the soldiers!

AUNT POLLY (*looking over her spectacles*).

Dear me! Now I shall have to make good my promise and buy you a parasol!

MARIAN (*laughing*).

You should know by this time, mother, not to

make rash promises to these Vandercourt youngsters.

(UNCLE TOBY *appears again in the doorway.*)

UNCLE TOBY (*impressively*).

General George Washington and Captain Nathan Hale!

(*They enter in military dress. The ladies curtsy charmingly to them. MR. VANDERCOURT and RICHARD bow. AUNT POLLY and MARIAN embrace NATHAN.*)

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

General Washington! It is such a pleasure to greet you here again. We have not had the opportunity since last New Year's ball. And Nathan too! We have missed you much, dear boy!

(*The children rush to NATHAN. They coax him to the window seat where they surround him, an eager, interested group.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

It is a pleasure to be here, indeed. The hospitality of the Vandercourts is famed throughout New York. (*His eyes twinkle merrily as he addresses MR. VANDERCOURT.*) And, Vandercourt, old fellow, while waiting for those red-coats to attack,—I fear I have perfected my chess game—enough even to challenge you!

MR. VANDERCOURT.

We shall see, presently. We shall see!
(UNCLE TOBY *appears again in the doorway.*)

UNCLE TOBY.

Captain Robin of the good ship "Annabel."
(*Enter CAPTAIN ROBIN, a jovial old seaman. He wears a long white beard, a seaman's cap over white hair, and carries a huge knapsack that bulges out at the side with its weight of contents.*)

THE CHILDREN (*rushing forward*).
Captain Robin! Captain Robin!

CAPTAIN ROBIN.
Ahoy! Lads and Lassies! Ahoy!

GEORGIA (*wide-eyed*).
Why, you look like Santa Claus!

CAPTAIN ROBIN.
A few trinkets I have here that I picked up
across the sea. Who would have use for them,
I wonder?

THE CHILDREN.
I! I! I!

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*interceding*).

Let us join Captain Robin in the library. He has wonderful things to show us, I am sure.

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*coming forward*).

Permit General Washington and I to join you there a little later, Annabel. We first have a matter of importance to discuss.

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

Of course, Nathan. Yet—on second thought, I think we shall wait until your conference is over. When you have finished, ring for us and we shall all celebrate together. (*To the others*). Come, folks, Captain Robin is a capital story teller. We'll let him entertain us in the library. (*They go out, leaving NATHAN alone in the drawing room with GENERAL WASHINGTON.*

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*pleasantly*).

This is some prank of yours, Captain Nathan?

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*seriously*).

Indeed, no,—Sir. It is the most important thing I can think of at the moment.

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*alert*).

Are you having trouble with your regiment?

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

I flatter myself that mine is one of the most well trained regiments in the Continental Army. Each man among them is a prince. I verily believe I have been given the flower of the colonies, Sir.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

That is true, no doubt. Then, tell me, Nathan, what is troubling you.

(Footsteps are heard in the hallway.)

CAPTAIN NATHAN *(cautiously)*.

One moment, Sir.

(UNCLE TOBY enters bearing wine and refreshments.)

UNCLE TOBY *(bowing elaborately)*.

Mrs. Vandercourt requests that yo' make yo' selves all comforter, Suh.

CAPTAIN NATHAN *(smiling)*.

Thank you, Uncle Toby.

GENERAL WASHINGTON *(sipping his wine)*.

Now, proceed, Nathan.

CAPTAIN NATHAN *(straight-forwardly)*.

A few days ago, Sir, you called for a volunteer,—a patriot who would be willing to enter

the British lines on Long Island and secure for you information as to the strength and disposition of the enemy's forces. Has that call been answered?

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*seriously*).

Not yet, my boy.

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*simply*).

I wish, then, Sir,—to volunteer.

(*The two men measure one another for a moment with their eyes. GENERAL WASHINGTON rises, and paces back and forth across the room. At length he turns to NATHAN who is still seated quietly near the fireplace.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*solemnly*).

Do you realize, my boy, that in all probability, this mission means—death?

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*quietly*).

I do. But I ask you, Sir, what is one life given to nurture such a glorious cause as the birth of a republic? Is it not better that one life should be endangered—than thousands?

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*hesitating*).

I would rather that someone other than yourself, Nathan, would perform the task. You are

a good soldier now. You are potentially a great leader. I hesitate—

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*youthfully impetuous*).

Let me go, Sir! Let me go! I have the heat of it in my blood! It is my mission. Mine! I have dreamed it! Planned it! Lived it! King George passed the Stamp Act—and I shuddered. Boston held its famous tea party,—I was one of the first young rebels up the gang-plank. England closed the port of Boston—and I smuggled in food from the sister colonies. The Liberty Bell rang—and it echoed only freedom in my heart. Freedom! America! Victory! We must have it, Sir! We must have it! Who shall go, if I do not?

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Not one has volunteered.

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

You are familiar, Sir, with the situation of the colonies. The British have more men—more weapons. They are better trained than we in military strategy. They have centuries of military law behind them. Lord Cornwallis has the cunning of a fox. He must be pounced upon unawares. Only one man can do this—not an army!

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Quite right, my boy. But, say, what are your plans?

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

I shall disguise myself as a Dutch school-master and visit all the enemy's camps in New York and Long Island. I shall make drawings of the works; and obtain all the information you require. You shall receive it secretly.

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*placing a hand upon NATHAN's shoulder*).

It is my duty to America to accept you as a volunteer, my boy. You may leave your post and set out upon your mission at the earliest possible time. The blessings of America and God be with you!

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*saluting GENERAL WASHINGTON*).

I am unafraid. I fear neither life nor death. (*Joyously*) A thousand thanks are yours, Sir. Now, let us ring for the others. Time is fleeting, and we owe it to our friends to make merry with them tonight!

(*He rings the bell.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

It is a charming household. And all of them—red-blooded patriots.

(*The doors are opened and the children rush in followed by* CAPTAIN ROBIN, MR. and MRS. VANDERCOURT, MRS. HALE *and* MARIAN.)

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

I am sorry to have detained you. We hope you were not bored while waiting.

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

Indeed not! Captain Robin has been telling us so many amusing adventures. You will pardon us, I hope, if we say that we scarcely noted the length of your absence.

RICHARD (*impatiently*).

Let us begin, mother. Please!

MR. VANDERCOURT (*smiling*).

Very well, son. (*He stands in the center of the room.*) Now, let us make ourselves comfortable, folks. It chances, General Washington, that you happened in on more or less of a family party tonight. We are honored, indeed, to have you with us.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

A family party is the best antidote I can think of, Sir, for two war-weary soldiers.

MR. VANDERCOURT.

It is the custom of our household, that on the eve the "Annabel" drops her anchor in our home port, that the closest members of the family shall come together and rejoice in her home-coming. It is my favorite ship, General, and as you know, bears the sweetest name in all the world,— "Annabel"—my wife's. Tonight she returns from the romantic ports of Spain and the West Indies. Her story, more or less, is told in her cargo. Captain Robin, let us begin.

(CAPTAIN ROBIN *hauls his bag to the center of the room. The children hover around him, like butterflies, in their eagerness, scarcely able to restrain themselves.*

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*tugging with the knot at the Opening of the bag*).

What Ho! Lads and Lassies! (*He is intentionally, provokingly slow.*) This old knapsack of mine wasn't intended to be opened to-night, I guess. (*He winks at the older folks.*)

GEORGIA.

Hurry, Captain Robin! Please!

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*teasingly*).

Can't help it, Miss Georgia. It just doesn't mean to be opened.

RICHARD.

Let me do it! I'll show you how!

CAPTAIN ROBIN.

Do you know the black magic, Mr. Vandercourt,—necessary to awaken this sleeping dragon!

MR. VANDERCOURT (*merrily*).

That is your secret, Captain.

CAPTAIN ROBIN.

I do declare! I think I have forgotten it! It is a code, I learned from the pirates along the southern coast of Spain.

(*At this, the children gleefully swoop down upon the bag,—and open it with little difficulty.*)

ROSAMOND (*joyfully*).

That for your black magic, Captain Robin!
(*He delves into the bag, and draws forth the first package. It is a long box, gaily wrapped and tied with bright-hued ribbons.*)

CAPTAIN ROBIN.

A little trinket I discovered in a tumble-down

shop on a street facing the muddy Guadalquivir river in Seville. The old crone who sold it to me said it had once been the prized possession of the little infanta of Spain. 'Tis marked—for Miss Georgia.

(GEORGIA receives it radiantly—and unwraps it.

It is a Spanish doll richly dressed in satin and a mantilla of lace.)

THE OTHERS.

How very lovely!

GEORGIA (*enthralled*).

Oh! Oh! Just the one thing I have been wishing for. Look, at her glorious hair! Her eyes! And her beautiful gown! She shall be queen of all my other dolls!

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

There will be war, I see, in Georgia's immense family of dolls.

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*drawing another package*).

A petite package! This I found in a little French shop which is a bit of Paris in Madrid. They are identical, I am told, to the ones with which Queen Isabella adorned the ladies of her court. And—it says—for Miss Rosamond.

(ROSAMOND accepts it eagerly. *She opens it to*

find a pair of silver slipper buckles the shape of a half-moon set with blue sapphires.)

ROSAMOND (*enthusiastically*).

Oh, mother! Mother! Marian! Aunt Polly! Look! Half-moon silver slipper buckles, set with my birth-stone,—the sapphire. I shall wear them at my birthday party on the twenty-second!

MARIAN.

How exquisite they are! One would think they were made for a princess!

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*elaborately*).

One day while wandering through secluded mountain passes in the Pyrenees, three sailors and myself came face to face with three bold pirates. Bold, bad pirates who were smuggling goods across the border to their fellow-pirates in France.

RICHARD (*intensely interested*).

Did they wear brass rings in their ears and rattle crossbones?

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*as he draws another package*).

All of that, my boy. In fact, so much did we admire their picturesque appearance, that we

bought of them the contents in this package. They send it to Master Richard—with their seal upon it.

(RICHARD *rushes forward to receive it. He opens it, and finds a complete pirate suit—the skull cap, shirt, and waistcoat,—trousers, bright red sash, and brass rings for the ears. All are embellished with a skull and cross-bones.*)

RICHARD (*dancing around in glee*).

Ho! Ho! What a pirate I shall be! (*Sternly*) Georgia, I shall behead all your dolls in the name of the great pirate king,—Richard!

GEORGIA (*teasingly*).

Try to, Oh, King,—just try to!

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*pretending alarm*).

My dear! He will make a havoc of the household!

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*drawing another package*).

This will be dear to every lady's heart. It was discovered in a tiny shop in the shadow of the Alcazar, in Granada. 'Tis told in story, that it came from the treasure-chest of a Moorish prince, and 'tis not less than seven score of years and ten! It is for—Miss Marian!

(MARIAN receives it, flushing with pleasure. It proves to be a Spanish comb of jade with matching ear-rings.)

MARIAN.

Oh, I have never owned anything so beautiful! How can I ever thank you, Uncle Carl? (*Dreamily*) That this loveliness should belong to me! Look, Nathan! Oh, look, everybody!

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

They are works of art, indeed. They could not be cherished more by anyone than your dear self. Here, let me see you wear them!

(*He places the comb in her hair at a coquettish angle, and fixes the ear-rings. They seem to transform her beauty in a strange, haunting manner.*)

AUNT POLLY.

You must wear them to the governor's military ball!

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*drawing two packages from the bag*).

A bit of beauty from Valencia! Made in an old mission by a princess who took the veil two hundred years ago! One is for—Aunt Polly! The other—merely says—for “Annabel.”

(*They open the packages with delight, and bring forth two Spanish shawls. ANNABEL'S is the shade of old ivory heavily embroidered with birds and flowers in a riot of gorgeous colorings. AUNT POLLY'S is black embroidered with flowers.*)

ANNABEL (*much pleased*).

Oh, Carl, how beautiful they are! No one but you could make such a perfect choice!

MR. VANDERCOURT (*gallantly*).

It pleases me to please you, my dear.

AUNT POLLY (*very much excited*).

A Spanish shawl! For a granny like me! (*Gaily*) Why, I shall feel like dancing!

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*affectionately*).

No crime, mother darling, we assure you. You have the heritage of youthful beauty carried into age.

(*He wraps the shawl about her—very tenderly . . .*)

CAPTAIN ROBIN (*after a moment*).

Yet, two more packages. Ah, they are for the gentlemen. Purchased from a Russian Jew in Granada! One—for General George Wash-

ington—the other for—Captain Nathan Hale!
(*They step forward and receive the packages.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

What a pleasure! (*He unwraps it.*)

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

By all the gods! How wonderful!
(*They unfold two luxurious army capes, lined
with fur, and high Russian boots with fur
tops to match.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*deeply impressed*).

Sir, we are greatly indebted to you. The fore-
thought you have shown is marvellous. The
winter of '76 and '77 will be a terrorizing one.
In these warm capes and boots we shall think of
you many times with gratitude.

MR. VANDERCOURT.

It is nothing, Sir. However, I, too, have
feared for our army during the winter months
to come. Our government has little extra funds
for added warmth. Therefore, I have taken the
liberty of providing these warm Russian boots
for the whole patriot army. There are none bet-
ter to weather cold and storm. Thousands of
pairs are stored in the hold of the "Annabel"
awaiting your order.

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*with emotion*).

How can I thank you, Sir?

MR. VANDERCOURT (*with dignity*).

A patriot asks for no praise—nor wishes appreciation for merely doing his duty.

(GENERAL WASHINGTON *offers his hand.*)

CAPTAIN ROBIN.

One moment, folks. Another package I have found in the bottom of the bag. 'Tis for Miss Rosamond.

(ROSAMOND, *enchanted, opens it. It proves to be a box of bayberry candles.*)

ROSAMOND.

Bayberry candles! How sweet! Don't you remember, mother, how I have always longed for them? (*She pauses for a moment, then speaks as though assailed by a sudden idea*). I know! I shall use them for service candles!

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*bewildered*).

Service candles, child?

ROSAMOND (*gaily*).

For my two best beloveds in the patriot army! Captain Nathan Hale and General George Washington! (*She makes a charming curtsy to them. They acknowledge it with pleasure.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

We are honored, little Miss Rosamond!
(*She carries the candles to the window seat—
lights them from the flame of another—and
places them in the window.*)

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

What a pretty thought, little cousin!
(*Enter UNCLE TOBY, who makes his announce-
ment from the doorway.*)

UNCLE TOBY.

It am twelve o'clock, Mrs. Vandercourt.
Supper am served in the dining room.

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

Come, let us all adjourn there.
(*They go out informally. CAPTAIN NATHAN
and GENERAL WASHINGTON linger for a mo-
ment in the drawing room.*)

CAPTAIN NATHAN.

The hour has come, Sir. I trust you to make
my apologies. I shall not bid my mother and
sister farewell, lest it should prove to be a too
painful experience for them.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

I shall make light of your departure.

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*emotionally*).

You will take care of them, Sir,—should anything happen?

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Rest assured that I shall, my boy. (*They shake hands.*) You are brave, indeed. God-speed! And—farewell!

NATHAN (*saluting*).

Farewell, Sir.

(*He goes out of the room without a backward glance. GENERAL WASHINGTON follows. The two bayberry candles burn brightly. . . .*)

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.

Behind the lines of the British Army in New York City. To the left, a bleak prison cell commands a view of a rude scaffold in an opening beyond. It is just before dawn, September 22, 1776.

(CAPTAIN NATHAN sits at a small table writing, apparently oblivious to his surroundings. A guard stands nearby. Outside the prison a sentry passes to and fro. CAPTAIN NATHAN has the attitude of one triumphant, even though in captivity.)

THE GUARD (*tauntingly*).

The last nail has been driven. Ha! Ha! It is a pretty scaffold!

(CAPTAIN NATHAN ignores his jest and continues writing.)

THE GUARD.

By my word, one of Washington's ragged continentals will look well up there— (*He looks toward the scaffold*) with a noose about his neck. 'Tis a pity (*He feigns grief*) for one so young

to die. Twenty-one years old, I'll wager! (*He laughs ironically*) Oh, well, **naughty** little Yankees must learn not to play with British fire!
(CAPTAIN NATHAN *continues to write.*)

THE GUARD (*sneeringly*).

Your last will and testament, I'll bet seven shillings. Better not go on with it—(*Elaborately*)—I assure you, Sir, it will get no further than your prison cell. (*He grows exasperated at NATHAN'S apparent inattention.*) Say, young fellow,—are you deaf? You filthy spy! Don't you know you are to die without trial—before sunrise?

CAPTAIN NATHAN (*serenely*).

Sir?

THE GUARD (*savagely*).

You are to die—without trial—before sunrise!
CAPTAIN NATHAN (*bowing in a grand manner*).

It does not matter, friend. My mission has been accomplished!

(THE GUARD *lunges toward him—when suddenly a bugle is heard blowing. It is sounded several times. THE GUARD rushes to the doorway. THE SENTRY addresses him.*)

THE SENTRY.

Victory, friend! Washington has been forced to leave New York! He is flying south with Lord Cornwallis at his heels!

THE GUARD (*maliciously*).

I must tell his young friend here! (*He turns to NATHAN.*) Much good has all your spying done you! Your friend Washington is flying from the town! Ha! Ha! Britannia rules New York!

(*For the first time NATHAN betrays alarm. He bows his head on his hands. . . . Day is breaking. . . . The cell is illumined by the cold, gray light which comes before the dawn. . . . Enter a group of British officers and soldiers.*)

AN OFFICER (*approaching NATHAN*).

The hour has come!

NATHAN (*with fire*).

You have given me neither the benefit of a trial nor a clergyman.

THE OFFICER.

A spy shall have the benefit of neither. Not even the Holy Bible! (*To the soldiers*) Take him out!

(*They approach NATHAN, intending to force him out. He eludes them—and walks forward—alone.*)

NATHAN (*proudly*).

I am ready.

THE OFFICER.

Watch him! Carefully!

(*They form a double line. He walks between them to the scaffold. At the foot of the scaffold, he reaches in his waistcoat and brings forth a letter.*)

NATHAN (*turning to THE OFFICER.*)

I have but one last request to make This is a letter written to my mother and my sister. Sir, I ask that you will please see that it reaches them.

(*THE OFFICER takes the letter, smiling maliciously. A moment later he tears it into many pieces and sifts it through his fingers before NATHAN'S face. NATHAN bows his head. . . . At the moment, he appears extremely young and sorrowful.*)

THE OFFICER.

Mount the scaffold!

(*NATHAN lifts his head proudly . . . he mounts the scaffold with dignity. An attendant,*

garbed in black, waits to throw the noose about his neck. The soldiers look on gloatingly. Suddenly NATHAN's face seems illuminated with an inner glory . . . with head held proudly high . . . eyes shining . . . he speaks his last words . . .)

NATHAN (*as the attendant adjusts the noose*).

"I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

(*There is silence for a moment, then THE GUARD cries sneeringly.*)

THE GUARD.

The Noble Young Patriot! Ho! Ho!
(*THE OFFICER, at last impressed with NATHAN's courage, turns on him in anger.*)

THE OFFICER.

Silence! You dog!
(*NATHAN's head droops in the shadow of death. . . The first faint red of the dawn appears in the sky . . .*)

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE 2.

The same as in Act 1. The drawing room of the Vandercourts in New York City.

(It is the evening of September 22, 1776. ROSAMOND'S two bayberry candles are still burning in the window. Enter MR. and MRS. VANDERCOURT, intense with excitement.)

MR. VANDERCOURT.

It is frightful, my dear,—frightful! A brave young lad like Nathan sentenced to die without trial.

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*sobbing*).

How cruel men can be! The officers must be more brute than human!

MR. VANDERCOURT.

War is indeed relentless. And there is no more serious charge than that tendered toward a spy.

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

General Washington sent word only today to Marian telling how valiantly he had served his

country! He had visited all the enemy's camps, made all the drawings, and accomplished all the least details of his mission. He was just about to return—triumphant—on the very eve that he was captured. Think of it, Carl,—how tragic!

MR. VANDERCOURT.

Hush, my dear, I hear the children coming.

MRS. VANDERCOURT.

We must not spoil Rosamond's birthday party. Her heart has been so set upon it. They are coming here to dance the minuet before going to the library for charades. I must play for them.

(ROSAMOND appears in the doorway—flower-like, laughing.)

ROSAMOND (*merrily*).

Are you ready, mother?

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*graciously*)'.

Yes, my dear.

(*She goes to the harpsichord and begins to play Beethoven's exquisite Minuet in G. A group of sixteen children—gay little figures in party attire, enter. They find their partners and dance the lovely minuet.*)

MRS. VANDERCOURT (*when the dance is ended.*)

Now, Rosamond, you may conduct your little friends to the library where Uncle Toby has arranged the stage for charades.

THE CHILDREN.

Oh! Oh! How jolly!

(*They disappear merrily through the doorway.*

ROSAMOND *is the last to go. As she is about to leave, MARIAN rushes into the drawing-room crying to MRS. VANDERCOURT.*)

MARIAN (*agonized*).

Annabel! Annabel! Come, quickly! Mother has heard about Nathan! She is as unconscious as one dead!

ROSAMOND (*terrified*).

What has happened, Marian? Oh, what has happened? Tell me!

MARIAN (*dully*).

Nathan—is—dead!

(*She rushes from the room with MR. and MRS.*

VANDERCOURT. ROSAMOND *stands quite still for a moment . . . then goes to the window where the candles are burning.*)

ROSAMOND (*distracted*).

Cousin Nathan! So young—so gay—so

light-hearted! Nathan . . . Oh, Nathan, come back to us! It can't be true! It can't—

(She sinks down on the window seat.)

ROSAMOND *(whispering)*.

Nathan—Nathan—dead!

She stays quite still . . . alone in the drawing-room . . . head bowed . . . eyes closed. Suddenly a light is reflected in the window pane. It is the lantern of the TOWN-WATCHMAN. His voice is heard chanting.)

THE TOWN WATCHMAN.

Nine o'clock and all is well!

Nine o'clock and all is well!

(For a moment she stares out at him . . . then, with a gesture of bitterness, she draws the curtains. . . . Quite deliberately, she quenches the light of NATHAN'S candle. . . .)

Curtain.

•

“LA CAPITAINÉ”

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“LA CAPITAINÉ”

“Wheel back the gun,” the gunner said,
When like a flash before him stood,
A figure dashed with smoke and blood,
With streaming hair and eyes aflame.
With lips that falter the gunner’s name.
“Wheel back the gun that never yet,
His fighting duty did forget?
His voice shall speak though he be dead,
I’ll serve my husband’s gun!” she said.
Oh, Molly, Molly, with eyes so blue,
Oh, Molly, Molly, here’s to you!
Sweet Honor’s roll will aye be richer,
To hold the name of Molly Pitcher!”
AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

“LA CAPITAINÉ”

A PLAY DEPICTING THE COURAGE OF A BRAVE LITTLE
WOMAN DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,—
MOLLIE PITCHER

Scene— The Battlefield of Monmouth, New Jersey.

Time—June 28, 1778.

CHARACTERS

MARY LUDWIG HAYS, "*Mollie Pitcher*" the little captain.

JOHN CASPER HAYS, her husband.

SUE GRANT, a friend and neighbor.

JANE and JIMMY, two ardent young patriots.

ANN and JERRY, their playmates.

GRANT WEST, member of the artillery.

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, leader of the American Army.

American soldiers, French Officers, French soldiers, etc.

“LA CAPITaine”

ACT I.

SCENE—*The quiet kitchen in the house of MOLLIE PITCHER, at Monmouth, N. J. At one end is a stone fireplace, over which hangs a black kettle scoured to shining. There are also a cupboard, a pine table, several chairs, and a smaller table which holds her sewing basket. Crispy white ruffled curtains are hung at the windows; pots of red geraniums stand in an orderly row on the sill; colorful rag rugs are scattered here and there on the floor.*

(*It is early morning,—Sunday, June 28, 1778. MOLLIE PITCHER is seated at the table. She is young,—(history tells us twenty-four at this date,)—and garbed in the colonial dress of the day. The dress is of gray homespun, and she wears a broad white cap with flaring ruffles. A letter is on the table before her.*)

MOLLIE (*reading aloud*).

MY MOLLIE:

A line to you in haste, my dear, amid the shot that's tearing along the front tonight. Look for me at Monmouth, soon,—troops advancing after General Clinton. Love to my own Mollie—

JOHN.

What news! (*She goes anxiously to the window*) Another meeting,—after almost one whole year of absence! (*softly*) John! Home again! For but a brief spell, I wager,—and yet,—Oh, Heaven,—'tis sweet! (*She goes to the doorway, and scans the horizon*) I see no sign of our army yet, nor of the enemy's either. (*Musically*) How strange 'twill seem to see this thing called War make our own front yard a battlefield! (*She takes up her knitting thoughtfully and seats herself near the window*) But I must not be idle. Our soldiers need more clothing,—even more than Heaven may need the Sabbath.

(*Enter JERRY, a lad of about eleven years.*

MOLLIE *looks up from her knitting.*)

MOLLIE (*pleasantly*).

Good morning, Jerry. You are up and about bright and early in the morning.

JERRY.

Please, Mrs. Hays, mother sent me to borrow a cup o' milk if you can spare it. Our cow jumped the fence sometime in the night,—we have searched the woods for miles around and can find no trace of her.

MOLLIE (*sympathetically*).

What a shame. (*She goes to the cupboard and pours a pitcher of milk from a can*) That is the third cow that has gone a-wandering in the last month. (*Shrewdly*) Shouldn't be surprised if there is more to it than jumping fences.

JERRY.

Mother says she thinks the squire should look into it.

MOLLIE.

It would not be going far wrong, I guess.
(*She gives him the pitcher of milk.*)

JERRY.

Thank you. And we'll send it back,—when the cow comes home.

MOLLIE (*smiling*).

Very well. (*She calls him as he is about to*

go through the doorway) Oh, Jerry, please tell your mother a letter came from John this morning. Our soldiers are chasing General Clinton down toward Monmouth,—and there will be a battle here, I fancy. John will be among our troops—

JERRY (*excitedly*).

A battle! Here! (*eagerly*) Do you suppose that we can see it?

MOLLIE (*grimly*).

I reckon you'll see more than you'll ever care to see, son.

JERRY (*ardently*).

Hurray!

MOLLIE.

Tell your mother we shall have to care for the troops,—perhaps, house and feed them too. And should you see Sue Grant, tell her to run in here for a moment.

JERRY (*bubbling over with the news*).

There'll be cannons—guns—horses—and shootin!—Oh, Gee! (*He begins to sing jubilantly*).

“Yankee Doodle went to town,
Yankee Doodle Dandy!” etc.

(*He goes out singing. MOLLIE looking after him, sighs, then goes back to her knitting.*)

MOLLIE (*sorrowfully*).

And boys not many years older than that child are dying for the cause out there.

(*The sound of church bells ringing is heard,—clear and sweet. . . . After a moment SUE enters, alert with excitement.*)

SUE.

Oh, Mollie, I was on my way here when I met little Jerry. So excited was he, he could scarcely contain himself! Is it true that our soldiers are marching down toward Monmouth? That a battle will be fought here?

MOLLIE.

It is true, indeed. General Washington has sent forward a division of our army under General Lee to pursue the British. John figures they will meet hereabouts. (*She is suddenly a-flutter with happiness*) Think of it, Sue, I shall see John again! Oh, it may be but scarcely for a moment, but I'll see him,—see him after almost a year of being parted!

SUE (*heartily*).

Oh, it will be glorious for you! If only we

can win this battle, it may mean half our victory gained! But, come, are you not going to meeting? 'Tis time,—the bells are ringing.

MOLLIE.

I must draw some water first, and put on the rice to boil. Come, walk with me down to the well.

(As she goes to the cupboard for a pitcher, the boom of a cannon is heard in the distance. They rush to the window.)

SUE.

Oh! Oh!

MOLLIE (*tensely*).

The armies are nearing Monmouth! See! A cloud of smoke is rising to the north!

SUE (*fearfully*).

There will be death and ruin here!

MOLLIE (*staunchly, as she takes up her pitcher*).

'Tis no time for fear. Come, let us go down to the well.

(They go out together,—SUE fearful,—MOLLIE very proud. . . . The distant sound of the cannon mingles with the pealing of the church bells. . . .)

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The woodland spring at Monmouth, destined to become famous as "Mollie Pitcher's Well."* Green trees wall a narrow foot-path a little distance away; rolling fields stretch eastward toward the Atlantic sea-coast.

(JANE and JIMMY, seven and eight, respectively, are at the well. JANE is drawing water. JIMMY is sitting idly nearby. The sun is shining brightly; birds are chattering; white and yellow daisies trail a maze of bloom over the fields.)

JANE (*a bit crossly*).

Jimmy! Jimmy! Come, help me lift this pail!

(*She tries in vain to bring forth the pail filled with water from the well. JIMMY laughs at her efforts.*)

JIMMY (*merrily*).

Pull, Jane,—pull! The pail cannot lift itself, you know!

JANE (*hotly*).

You are the laziest boy I know, Jimmy Davis! Mother said that you were to draw the water! I was just to come along to see that you would hurry back!

JIMMY (*laughing*).

Ho! Ho! (*Tantalizingly*) As though you could make me hurry! Sisters should know by this time not to interfere with older brothers! (*He draws the bucket from the well with a great show of ease.*) There, little weakling! Call again upon a man!

JANE (*admiringly*).

My, but you are strong, Jimmy. When you grow up you'll be a captain in the army!

JIMMY (*expanding under her praise*).

I mean to be a general! Just as great as General Washington! (*He struts about pompously*) General James Davis! Behold! (*Absorbed in dreams of his greatness, he kicks over the pail. The water spills out on the ground.*)

JANE (*witheringly*).

General James—Stupid,—I should say!

JIMMY (*wrathfully*).

You'll see! You'll see! Glad I am not a girl, anyhow. Anything's better than being that!

(So lost have they been in their quarreling that they are oblivious to the approach of ANN, a little sunny haired girl, with her arms filled with daisies. She reached them just in time to hear JIMMY's last words.)

ANN (*laughing*).

Why, Jimmy! You little wretch! It is the loveliest thing in all the world to be a girl!

JIMMY (*guiltily*).

'Tis not!

JANE (*hastening to greet her*).

Ann! When did you come? I didn't see you until just this minute.

ANN.

I just came this minute. What is the matter with Jimmy? I never saw him so cross.

JANE (*smiling*).

He kicked over the pail of water. Better hurry and draw another, Jimmy. Mother will be waiting.

(JIMMY draws another pail of water sulkily,

and without a word trudges off down the road. ANN calls after him, merrily.)

ANN.

Jimmy! Jimmy!

(He looks back but does not answer.)

ANN.

Hurry back! We have something to tell you.
(He shrugs his shoulders nonchalantly and goes on).

JANE.

Such pretty daisies, Ann. You must have gone into the fields early this morning.

ANN.

Not so early. There are so many of them that it takes scarcely any time at all to pick a bouquet. I am going to take these to little Betty Grant who has been ill for so long. Her father died at Valley Forge, you know. *(She gazes out over the country.)* Look, Jane, isn't it glorious here? Such green fields filled with flowers—blue sky—and sunshine over it all. The fairies and all the little people of the wood must be very happy to live in such a home.

(Suddenly, a boom of a cannon is heard, far-off.)

JANE (*startled*).

What was that? Oh!

ANN (*jumping up*).

A cannon's roar, I am sure! The armies must be coming toward Monmouth!

JANE.

Let us go back to the town!
(*Jimmy and Jerry come running down the pathway*).

JERRY (*much excited*).

Have you heard the news?

THE GIRLS.

Tell us! Tell us!

JERRY.

There will be a battle today! Here! At Monmouth! General Washington is sending General Lee after the British army! They will meet around here and fight!

ANN (*wide-eyed and breathless*).

How do you know, Jerry? Who told you?

JERRY.

Mrs. Hays received a letter from her husband. He's with General Lee.

ANN (*mournfully*).

All the daisies will be crushed!

JIMMY.

Ho! Ho! What do armies care for daisies!
Jerry and I are going to watch the fighting,
aren't we, Jerry?

JERRY.

You are right!

JANE (*mockingly*).

Until the shooting starts,—then you'll run
away as fast as ever you can.

JIMMY (*vindictively*).

We're not girls! You'll see!

ANN (*making an elaborate curtsy*).

Very well, gentlemen. We shall leave you to
await the arrival of the troops!

(*The girls go down the road, a bit furtively, lest
at any moment they fear an invisible army
to appear and engulf them. The sun shines
on the daisy field. . . .*)

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.

"Mollie Pitcher's Well" as in Act 2.

(JERRY and JIMMY are still loitering near the well,—looking toward the north where a cloud of smoke is looming on the horizon.)

JERRY (*tensely*).

They're coming, Jimmy! They're coming!

JIMMY (*straining his neck to see*).

I can't see beyond the wood! Look! Look!
The little columns of smoke there!

JERRY (*with bravado*).

I wouldn't miss this battle for anything, would you?

(*The first shell comes sailing through the air—and bursts a little way apart from them with a flare of flame. The boys crawl backward hurriedly.*)

JERRY (*in a not too convincing voice*).

Isn't this great?

JIMMIE (*his voice quivering*).

I—I guess so.

(MOLLIE and SUE approach the well. MOLLIE is carrying her pitcher,—quite a large one designed with colorful Japanese pagodas.)

MOLLIE (*fanning herself*).

My, but it's hot!

SUE.

It will be hotter before noon.

MOLLIE (*half fiercely*).

Such a day for fighting! Oh, good Heaven!
(*She sees JERRY and JIMMY for the first time. They are crouching near the well, hand in hand.*)

MOLLIE (*laughing gaily*).

Well—of all the patriots! Look, Sue,—two brave little soldiers waiting action!

JERRY (*defiantly*).

We are going to watch the battle.

MOLLIE (*merrily*).

All right, partners.

(*As she kneels down to fill her pitcher, the advance of the armies becomes ominous.*

Stray shells and broken missiles burst here and there; the sound of the cannon grows louder.)

SUE.

Come, let us go back! 'Tis not safe here.
(*Another shell bursts nearby. The two boys get up quickly and run off down the road at an amazing rate of speed.*)

MOLLIE (*laughing*).

They were going to watch the battle!

SUE (*terrified*).

Come, Mollie! We must go! We shall be killed!

MOLLIE.

I am going to wait here until I see John.

SUE (*coaxingly*).

No, No! Mollie—please!

MOLLIE.

I am not afraid. The armies are not near us yet.

SUE.

Please—please—come back with me Mollie. John would be terrified if he knew you were here.

MOLLIE (*more gently*).

You go back alone, Sue. (*Finally*) I am going to stay!

(*The rush of troops is heard not far away. The sound of the cannons grows deafening. SUE, with a last beseeching look at MOLLIE, rushes away. MOLLIE sits down on the edge of the well, her pitcher beside her. She covers her ears with her hands to shut out the noise of battle. She waits. . . . Several moments later a group of troops rushes by. Then another. They scarcely notice her. A third group comes. One soldier looks at her, warningly, yet not unkindly.*)

THE SOLDIER.

Better run, sister! Better run! War ain't no girls' game.

(*A fourth group advances, bayonets bared. The firing continues. JOHN HAYS is among them. MOLLIE cries out to him.*)

MOLLIE.

John! John! It is I—I, Mollie!

JOHN (*coming toward her*).

Mollie! Here! Oh, good Heaven!

MOLLIE (*embracing him*).

John! John! (*She laughs gaily, and half-*

sobs at the same time.) How wonderful to see you again. Oh, I'm glad—! Glad! Glad!

JOHN (*holding her for a moment*).

My own Mollie! My own!

(*Another group of soldiers rushes through. A captain is among them. He calls to JOHN.*)

THE CAPTAIN.

Sorry, soldier! You must fall in line! (*Recognizing him*) Oh, it's you, Private Hays. You're wanted up front. They need a gunner!

JOHN (*lingering a moment*).

It won't be long until I'll see you again, Mollie. Cheerio! (*He laughs boyishly*) After this battle! (*Eagerly*) And we are going to win, Mollie. We'll win!

(*He dashes away. More troops advance. Two or three fall nearby. MOLLIE hesitates a moment, then rushes to them. One is dead. To the other two, she offers a drink from her pitcher.*)

THE SOLDIER (*gratefully*).

You angel!

(*Still another group of troops rush in. Upon seeing MOLLIE with her pitcher they stop and drink from it hurriedly. To those who*

fall she carries water. When it is empty, she dashes to the well, fills it, and rushes back to the soldiers. At length, a cannon is wheeled in. JOHN is serving it. She carries water to him. Many trips she makes back and forth to the well. . . . Suddenly, JOHN falls to the ground. . . . THE GUNNER shouts orders.)

THE GUNNER.

Wheel back the gun!

(MOLLIE, hearing the order, turns from her task of filling the pitcher at the well. Seeing JOHN lying on the ground, she rushes to him. He is dead. . . . For a moment, she covers her face with her hands.)

THE GUNNER.

Back the gun to the rear!

(Mollie stares at him for a moment, unbelievably. Suddenly, she rises from her knees and faces him).

MOLLIE.

No! No! Let me serve the gun! Let me take my husband's place! He would wish me to— Oh, he would!

THE GUNNER (*looking down at her*).

Impossible!

(*Without another word, she turns to the cannon and begins serving it. Her hair is streaming about her . . . her eyes are strangely alight. A group of French soldiers nearby urge her on in a burst of admiration.*)

THE SOLDIERS (*almost singing*).

Bravo! Bravo! Mollie! Victory is ours!
(*She goes on serving the cannon as the rage of the battle continues. . . .*)

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE 2.

A room in an old colonial house near the Monmouth Battlefield, which GENERAL WASHINGTON has taken for his temporary headquarters. The room is scantily furnished, a huge oak table stands in the center, chairs are placed at random here and there. An open door leads out on the lawn through which one can see a flag pole, from which the stars and stripes are flying. The flag is after the manner of the one made by Betsy Ross in 1777.

(It is sun-down,—the day after the victorious Battle of Monmouth. GENERAL WASHINGTON is seated at the table,—maps, reports, etc., spread out before him. Soldiers are stationed here and there on the lawn; many French and American soldiers stand in little groups chattering.)

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*to an aide nearby*).

Is Mrs. Hays coming?

THE AIDE (*saluting*).

She should be here at any moment, Sir.

(*The sound of a bugle is heard. The boy bugler can be seen through the doorway. He stands on the lawn and plays, "Retreat" as the flag is taken down. The soldiers stand at attention. GENERAL WASHINGTON also rises to attention.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*after the ceremony*).

When Mrs. Hays comes, bring her to me at once. Such a brave girl should not be kept waiting.

(*Commotion is evidenced among the soldiers out on the lawn. There is the sound of laughter and anticipation. A group of twelve soldiers form a double line, and cross swords high in the air. At length, MOLLIE is led in triumph through the archway of swords. GENERAL WASHINGTON rises and awaits her coming.*)

MOLLIE (*crying softly*).

Oh, what a ceremony!

(*She appears in the doorway. Seeing GENERAL WASHINGTON, she hesitates a moment, then curtsies to him quite charmingly. He goes forward to meet her. The soldiers crowd around.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*cordially*).

Mrs. Hays—(*whimsically*) or shall I, too,

call you "Mollie Pitcher?" This is a pleasure, I assure you.

MOLLIE (*shyly*).

Thank you, Sir.

GENERAL WASHINGTON (*with much sincerity*).

I regret deeply that Private Hays was called upon to give his life for the cause yesterday. (MOLLIE *bows her head*.) Yet, it was with supreme admiration that I learned of your splendid courage. For service rendered in the Battle of Monmouth, I wish to present you with a sergeant's commission,—and upon the next act of Congress,—you shall be awarded with half-pay for life.

(*He gives her legal papers to show her status as sergeant. She takes them modestly.*)

MOLLIE.

It is a great honor to be so awarded by you, General Washington. I thank you with all my heart.

(*She curtsies to him again,—he bows to her diffidently. THE SOLDIERS, unable to restrain themselves any longer, give vent to their enthusiasm.*)

THE SOLDIERS.

Three cheers for Sergeant Mollie! Three cheers! Three cheers!

(A French soldier rushes up to her with his hat filled with gold pieces.)

THE FRENCH SOLDIER.

From Lafayette and his battery. For Molly —“La Capitaine!” Vive la Mollie!
(She takes the gift graciously).

MOLLIE.

Why, how kind! How kind!
(A bugle summoning the soldiers is sounded. They go out and stand at attention for roll-call. GENERAL WASHINGTON steps out to view them. They stand triumphantly in the red after-glow of the setting sun. . . . MOLLIE goes to the window to view them. She is sparkling with triumph, yet sadness and wistfulness show in her eyes. As the roll is called, each man answers, “Here.”)

THE CAPTAIN *(calling the roll).*

Private Holmes

Private Landis

Private Richwine

Private Graham, etc.

MOLLIE (*softly, drawing back in the shadow*).

Private John Casper Hays! You will always be here to me, John. "Here"—always!

(*She bows her head sorrowfully. . . . The last rays of the setting sun cast their light upon her. . . .*)

Curtain.

WEST O' THE ALLEGHENIES

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WEST O' THE ALLEGHENIES

A ONE-ACT PLAY OF THE FIRST PIONEER CHRISTMAS
SPENT ON THE WILDERNESS ROAD BLAZED BY
DANIEL BOONE

*The scenes are in Boonesboro, one of the first settlements
in Kentucky.*

The time is December 24, 1775.

CHARACTERS

DANIEL BOONE, *famous hunter and pioneer.*

"JENNY" BOONE, *his wife.*

ENOCH BOONE, *their son.*

RICHARD CALLOWAY, *Daniel Boone's friend.*

JOHN FLOYD, *an able writer and surveyor.*

JAMES HARROD, *a resolute backwoodsman.*

TED, MARY, VIRGINIA, *pioneer children adopted
by the Boones.*

MARK BRAITHWAITE, *a stranger.*

The Sheriff, Townspeople of Boonesboro, etc.

WEST O' THE ALLEGHENIES

SCENE—*The interior of DANIEL BOONE's log cabin at Boonesboro, the town founded by him in the great wilderness of Kentucky. It is furnished after the manner of the early settler's cabin with a pine table, several chairs, including an arm chair, an old sea chest, a cupboard, and a spinning wheel. At one end of the room is a stone fireplace, in which a huge log burns right merrily. Spotless white curtains conceal the windows, which are made of oiled paper, and face northward. Colorful rag rugs adorn the floor.*

It is late afternoon, the day before Christmas, 1775. MRS. BOONE is seated at her spinning wheel; JOHN FLOYD occupies the arm chair before the fireplace. He is reading.

JENNY (*meditatively*).

Does it not seem strange to you, John, that we should be spending Christmas alone with a mere handful of people in this great white wilderness?

JOHN (*looking up from his book*).

Strange, indeed, and yet 'tis wonderful! Think of it, Jenny, we are at the very outposts of a vast unexplored country. We are trail blazers, wielding our torches to advance the cause of civilization. What we do today becomes the corner-stone for the builders of tomorrow. We build a road—and where it leads—will mark the way for the caravan of the ages.

JENNY.

Trust you to see the romantic side of it, John. Daniel says you have the soul of the philosopher and the poet—which means you have the gift of seeing light when all others are given to see—just darkness.

JOHN (*closing his book*).

You mean that you are weary of it, Jenny? You would rather go back east—than blaze the trail still further westward?

JENNY (*moodily*).

Today—I would.

JOHN (*sympathetically*).

Tell me why.

JENNY.

I guess because the time is nearing Christmas.

Back home in North Carolina, Christmas was always a day of joyousness; of festivity; especially for the children. (*She leans toward him confidentially.*) 'Twas such fun, John, to purchase little gifts for them! (*She stares dreamily into the fire for a moment.*)

JOHN.

Tell me about it.

JENNY (*enthusiastically*).

Oh, there were always such tempting little things in the tiny shops! Funny little toys—amusing games and dolls—and little Christmas bells of glass and colored wax. We used to always hang our gifts upon the tree. (*She rises and goes to the window. It is snowing.*) But what can one buy here—or even make—without materials? All we have is the white silence of the forest—(*Fiercely*) and every day is like unto the last!

JOHN.

So that is it! You fear the disappointment of the children when they find tomorrow morning that sly old Santa failed to come to the wilderness?

JENNY (*sadly*).

That's it, indeed.

JOHN.

Where are they now?

JENNY.

Harrod has taken them into the forest. I told them to find the brightest pine tree on Blue Moon Hill and bring it home for Christmas.

JOHN.

And where is Daniel? Trapping?

JENNY (*smiling*).

Trapping—and trading. He thought, mayhap, he could find a stag for a Christmas feast. And I—I entreated him to seek an Indian trading post where he might trade the warm shawls I have knitted for Indian dolls and baskets. (*She turns to him wistfully.*) You see, John,—there must be Christmas!

JOHN (*humorously*).

There will be, no doubt. Cherokee squaws should like those shawls of yours, Jenny.

(JENNY goes to the cupboard and takes down a wooden box.)

JENNY (*brightening*).

See! (*She opens the box.*) I have made some Christmas candles. Are they not pretty?

Look at these—how red! I stained them with barberries.

JOHN.

They are very pretty, I grant. You prove, Jenny, my friend, that "Necessity is the mother of invention."

(She makes another trip to the cupboard and brings forth a basket of shelled dry corn.)

JENNY (*gaily*).

And when the children come back—there will be corn to pop and make into festoons!

JOHN (*whimsically*).

And will there be plum pudding?

JENNY (*making a curtsy to him*).

There will indeed, kind Sir. (*The jingling of bells is heard in the distance. Gay voices are singing.*) But what is that?

THE VOICES.

Dashing through the snow,
In a one-horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go,
Laughing all the way.

Bells on bob-tail ring,
Making spirits bright,
What fun it is to ride and sing,
A sleighing song tonight!

CHORUS.

Jingle bells! Jingle bells!
Jingle all the way!
Oh, what fun it is to ride,
In a one-horse open sleigh!
(*The voices sound nearer.*)
Now the ground is white,
Go take it while you're young,
Take the girls tonight,
And sing this sleighing song.
Just get a bob-tailed bay,
Two forty for his speed,
Then hitch him to an open sleigh,
And—crack! you'll take the lead.

(JENNY rushes to open the cabin door. A sleigh is stopped outside. Snow is falling softly. Enter HARROD and the children—ENOCH, TED, MARY, and VIRGINIA,—in high spirits. HARROD shoulders a huge pine tree; the children carry pine branches with pine cones upon them, evergreens, holly leaves bright with holly berries, and mistle-

toe. *As they take off their wraps they chatter merrily.*)

JENNY (*joyously*).

Oh! Oh! What have you found?

ENOCH.

Everything, mother! Everything to make the house bright for Christmas.

TED (*excitedly*).

You should have seen the giant tree fall! It echoed like thunder through the forest!

VIRGINIA (*enthusiastically*).

And, Mother Jenny, such fun it was riding home! We had just come down from Blue Moon Hill when Mr. Calloway came along in his sleigh. We all climbed in—and Zip!—you should have seen his horse tear through the glitter of the snow!

MARY.

It is glorious outside, Mother Jenny. I tumbled in a heap of snow up on Blue Moon Hill and it was just like falling into thistle-down.

JENNY (*laughing*).

You all look as though you have been tumbling in the snow. Your noses are as red as straw-

berries! But, come, let us put up the tree. In which corner shall it be?

ENOCH (*going to the corner near the window*).

This corner, mother.

TED (*indicating another corner*).

No. This corner!

JENNY (*feigning dismay*).

Well, *which* corner shall it be?

VIRGINIA.

In the one near the window, Mother Jenny. Then people can see it as they go by outside.

HARROD.

Enoch wins!

(*He begins to set up the tree in the corner indicated. JOHN and the two little boys assist him.*)

JENNY.

Come, girls, we will hang the garlands!

(*They proceed to decorate the cabin. VIRGINIA drapes the window pane with holly. JENNY hangs mistletoe above the door. MARY arranges pine branches here and there about the fire-place. JOHN deserts the tree and begins to drape evergreens among the rafters.*)

VIRGINIA.

We are invited to sing carols with the other children of the village tonight, Mother Jenny. It will be such fun! To go from house to house and sing as the "waits" of old used to do in England.

JOHN.

'Tis a merry custom. (*He smiles and winks at JENNY.*) I told you that you needn't worry, Jenny Boone! See, we will be caroling—even in the wilderness.

JENNY.

I love the old-time carols. There is something sweet about them that gets into your heart. (*She stands back to survey her handiwork.*) There, that mistletoe does have an air, does it not?

MARY (*proudly*).

And look at my fireplace! My, but this pine is fragrant. Smell—how sweet!

(*The decorations have indeed transformed the cabin into a veritable Christmas bower. The children trip about delighted with their efforts. JENNY brings forth the corn from the cupboard.*)

JENNY.

Come, now, gather round the fireplace. I have another task for you to do!

(The children do her bidding. TED spies the corn.)

TED.

Oh, we are going to pop corn!

THE OTHERS *(eagerly)*.

What fun!

ENOCH.

Hurry, give me some, mother.

(She distributes the corn. They run to the cupboard for pans, then back again to the fire to pop the corn.)

HARROD.

There, now, the tree is up! I'll leave it for you to trim—and go about my way. 'Tis growing late.

JENNY.

Thank you, Harrod, indeed. It was sweet of you to go into the wood for us. And, remember, you and your good wife are to dine with us tomorrow.

HARROD.

We shall not forget. (*He goes to the door.*)
Goodbye, youngsters. And to you, John.
Merry dreams tonight.

THE CHILDREN.

Goodbye! Goodbye!
(*He goes out. JENNY stands in the doorway
looking after him.*)

JENNY (*fearfully*).

The shadows fall. Surely, Daniel should be home by this time. It is snowing hard. I fear that he will lose his way. (*She comes back into the room.*)

JOHN.

Daniel Boone get lost! (*He laughs reassuringly.*) Never! Such a cunning master of woodcraft—I have never seen nor heard of. Why, Jenny, Nature is to him as human as your own sweet flesh and blood. The winds and waters have communion with him—and even the mountains seem to bend down as though to speak with him. Trees are his companions—to him each blade of grass has life. Neither man nor beast can frighten him.

JENNY (*her eyes glowing*).

He is brave and daring, I know. Who else but Daniel could attempt to conquer the wilderness by breaking through it?

(*There is a knock on the door. JENNY opens it. The town sheriff stands outside.*)

JENNY.

Good evening, Sir. Won't you come in?

THE SHERIFF.

Just for a moment, Jenny. Good evening, John. Where's Daniel?

JENNY.

He should be home at any moment. He has gone trapping in the hills today.

(*The SHERIFF takes a paper from his pocket.*)

THE SHERIFF (*giving it to JENNY*).

I just want to leave this notice with you. It concerns a man the law is after,—one Mark Braithwaite, a fugitive from justice. 'Tis said he is a horse thief,—that he has raided a dozen ranches and plantations in the south. He was captured in Virginia, but just last week broke jail. So—watch out for strangers! There is a \$300 reward.

JENNY (*alarmed*).

How terrible! Look, John, here is his picture. It is but a charcoal drawing but one can see how heavily he's bearded. And what fierce eyes he has!

JOHN.

'A bandit's face indeed.

THE SHERIFF.

I must be on my way. Goodnight, folks.

JENNY.

Goodnight! Goodnight!

(*She lays the picture on the table and is about to sit nearby when the door is opened again.*

DANIEL *enters jovially.*)

DANIEL (*shaking the snow from his cap*).

Hello, everybody! Merry Christmas!

JENNY (*affectionately*).

Daniel!

(*She goes to him and helps him off with his coat. It is made of bearskin. The children rush to greet him. He is a picturesque character—clad in a hunter's suit and cap. He has great dark eyes which show tolerance and mirth. His bushy hair is worn to his shoulders.*)

JENNY.

I am so glad you have come. I was beginning to grow fearful.

DANIEL (*laughing*).

It takes a long time to trap a buck, sweet Jenny. You should have been with me, John. Great Sport! I captured the finest one in all Kentucky. We'll feast on him for Christmas—and for days and weeks thereafter.

JENNY.

How glorious! (*She fixes her eyes upon him questioningly.*) And did you find a trading post, Daniel?

DANIEL.

I found the post, but no traders, Jenny mine. The Cherokees are moving south. (*Regretfully.*) I had to bring back your shawls. Don't look so disappointed, Jenny. I am very sorry too, dear.

JENNY (*sadly*).

There is no help for it, I guess. We are in the wilderness. (*She lays the shawls on a chair nearby.*)

ENOCH (*showing the thief's picture to DANIEL*).

Have you seen this, father? Look, a real horse thief! He's heading west, they say.

DANIEL.

I heard about it as I came through the village, son.

JOHN.

What think you about it, Daniel?

DANIEL.

I do not know. From what I learn the man has served all but six months of his sentence. He could bear the tedium of prison no longer. He was clever enough to make his escape. Freedom is the law of the wilderness. If he reaches here, why should it not be his?

(The children start to adorn the Christmas tree with strings of popcorn. JENNY places food and drink upon the table. JOHN prepares to go. The room is very dim with the fading light of day.)

JOHN *(rising)*.

'Tis growing dark. I did not realize the lateness of the hour. I must be gone. Goodbye, folks.

THE OTHERS

Goodbye, John.

VIRGINIA (*calling after him*).

Come and see our gifts tomorrow!

(JENNY, *with a despairing look at DANIEL, lowers her eyes mournfully.*)

TED (*from his place at the tree*).

Light the candles, Mother Jenny, please!

We can scarcely see to work.

(JENNY *lights three candles and places them on the table.*)

JENNY (*attempting merriment*).

You will have to leave your tasks now, darlings. Go wash your hands, then come to the table.

(*They scamper away to the kitchen, and in a moment return, and seat themselves at the table. DANIEL and JENNY sit at either end of the table. As they begin to eat, another knock is heard at the door. DANIEL opens it.*)

DANIEL.

Good evening, stranger.

(*A beggar stands without,—a man in tattered garments. He is without a hat, his hands look numb with cold. He carries a small knapsack.*)

THE STRANGER.

Will you give me a little food? (*He shivers violently.*)

JENNY (*rising compassionately*).

Oh, let him come in, Daniel. Let him come in!

DANIEL (*stepping aside*).

Enter!

(*The beggar comes in. JENNY prepares a place for him.*)

THE STRANGER (*gratefully*).

You are kind.

JENNY (*softly*).

This is the Christmas season. One could not be otherwise.

(*She sets food and drink before him. He partakes of it as one famished. DANIEL studies him keenly.*)

JENNY.

You have come a long way?

THE STRANGER.

I have come down from the north. I am on my way to South Carolina.

DANIEL.

Why do you travel by foot?

THE STRANGER.

My good horse perished in the storm that swept the wilderness a week ago. After that I lost my way.

DANIEL.

The wind is sharp tonight. The road will be a lonely one to travel. You had better stop with us for the night.

JENNY (*hospitably*).

Tomorrow is Christmas day. Come, be our guest.

THE STRANGER

You are very good, my friends. But I must hurry on. The way is far. (*His voice becomes low.*) I must not stop.

(*For the first time, he notices the portrait of the bandit which ENOCH carelessly lays beside him. DANIEL watches him closely. He reads it casually, but shows no sign of alarm. At length he looks up and observes DANIEL watching him.*)

THE STRANGER (*smiling*).

A right daring fellow!

DANIEL.

A rogue!

*(The sound of a school bell is heard ringing.
The children bustle about merrily.)*

VIRGINIA.

There is the bell! It is a signal for us to gather at the school house!

(All, except TED, hurry into their outdoor togs, and depart in delight. A moment later they are heard calling from outside.)

THE CHILDREN.

Mother! Father! Come, here! Hurry!

(JENNY and DANIEL rush outside. The stranger is left alone in the cabin. He looks around furtively. He takes a bit of burnt charcoal from the fireplace and pens a few lines, hastily. He gathers some food from the table, surveys the cabin again, then seizes one of JENNY's shawls. With a last furtive look toward the doorway, he hurries away through the kitchen entrance, leaving the knapsack behind him. A moment later, DANIEL and JENNY re-enter with TED.)

JENNY (*blankly*).

He's gone! The stranger's gone, Daniel,—gone!

DANIEL (*meaningly*).

Rude of him to go without a word, wasn't it?

JENNY (*staring at him for a moment*).

You mean—oh! (*She discovers the note.*)
Here's a note from him! (*She reads.*)

My Friends:

I am grateful for your kindness. As I told you—I must go. Your home makes me homesick. My wife and youngsters are waiting back in South Carolina. I am leaving my knapsack. In it are a few things your little girls and boys might like. I can get more. Thank you again.

Mark Braithwaite.

JENNY.

Oh, Daniel,—he was the horse thief!

DANIEL.

We might send the sheriff after him.

JENNY.

No! No! Let him escape, Daniel, please. He's so weary—so hungry for his home and family. I could see the hunger in his eyes.

DANIEL.

His disguise was clever,—I'll say that for him. He didn't resemble the picture any more than I

do. He showed no sign of alarm even when I caught him reading the notice. Only six months more to serve—and he couldn't bear it! Oh, let him go.

JENNY (*brushing her eyes which have filled with tears.*)

Poor fugitive! Fighting the great white wilderness for freedom!

TED (*impatiently*).

Open the knapsack, Mother Jenny!

JENNY (*laughing*).

The sand-man's calling you, Ted. Scamper away to bed! You shall see everything tomorrow.

(*TED goes away unwillingly. JENNY kneels beside the knapsack. She opens it. Her face lights up like a happy child's.*)

JENNY (*joyously*).

Oh, Daniel! We will have gifts for the children—now! Ho! Mark Braithwaite proves to be a Santa Claus! We shall have a real Christmas with these upon the tree. (*She lifts out the toys,—one after another.*) Look,—an Indian doll for Mary! Snow-shoes for Enoch! A buffalo, carved of wood, for Ted! A bow and arrows,—for Enoch, too. Indian baskets and

such cunning moccasins for the girls! And beads,—strings of them! (*She gets up in delight.*) Why, he must have gotten these for children of his own. Come, let us hang them on the tree. Santa has come to the wilderness!

(*As they are about to hang the gifts on the tree, singing voices are heard. The old anthem, "Silent Night, Holy Night," drifts back to them.*)

JENNY.

Listen! The Christmas carols!

(*They go to the doorway.*)

JENNY (*when the song is ended*).

How beautiful! Christmas carols in the wilderness! "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

DANIEL.

And to Mark Braithwaite!

JENNY.

Look, Daniel,—how still the night! The wind has ceased to tear through the forest. And how bright—the stars! Oh, those carols go through and through me!

DANIEL.

You are trembling,—(*Coaxingly*) come inside, sweet Jenny.

(*She lingers in the open doorway for a moment. The stars are low and very brilliant . . . At length she comes back to the tree—radiant. TED peeps down on the proceedings mischievously from his place in the loft.*)

Curtain.

BLACK CONGO

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BLACK CONGO

A PLAY IN WHICH ABRAHAM LINCOLN KEEPS A VOW HE
MADE WHEN A BOY AT A SLAVE MARKET IN NEW ORLEANS

*The scenes are in New Orleans, La. Washington, D. C.
and Gettysburg, Penna.*

The time is 1826 to 1863.

CHARACTERS

BLACK CONGO, *a slave boy transported from Africa to New Orleans.*

HONEY ROSE, *his little sister.*

ZANZIBAR, *another African native.*

"DUTCH" HENRY, *a slave dealer; Captain of the "African Moon."*

"ABE," *later Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.*

EDDIE SCOTT, *a boyhood friend of Lincoln's.*

MRS. NORMAN LEEDS, *wealthy matron of Washington, D. C.*

GLORIA, *her daughter.*

JAY, STANLEY, HELEN, *Gloria's friends.*

Officers and soldiers in the Union Army, Dignitaries of State, etc., slaves, and southerners.

BLACK CONGO

ACT I.

SCENE—*A flat boat loaded with farm produce is docked close by a levee in a sheltered bayou of the Mississippi River, near New Orleans. It is not a pretentious boat, and has the appearance of being constructed of hewn logs, roughly nailed together. At one end is a dilapidated cabin. There is a small ladder of eight rungs or so leaning against it. Besides the produce, an old table and a few broken down chairs are on "deck." On the shore, on a little hill above the levee, is an open space with magnolia and orange trees blossoming in the background. In this opening stands an auction block which is used by numerous slave dealers of the vicinity to market slaves brought from Africa.*

(It is the hour just before dawn,—a morning in the spring of the year 1826. There is an unbroken stillness, except for the waters of the bayou lapping softly against the boat.

The sun rises slowly, flooding the scene with rose tinged with gold. It touches the rude cabin, the old chairs, and lies in sunny patches on the deck. It glorifies the trees in blossom on the shore. At length, ABE, an awkward, ungainly lad of seventeen, steps out of the cabin. He is followed by EDDIE SCOTT, another strapping young backwoodsman from Illinois. LINCOLN surveys the scene with a touch of awe in his manner.)

EDDIE (*jovially*).

Here we are, Abe,—in the little old South! Land o' cotton—sunshine—tobacco juice and slaves. Let's have a look!

ABE (*reverently*).

Look at that sun, Eddie. Rising like a red bird and spreading its wings over the waters.

EDDIE (*absently*).

Pretty, I would say.

ABE.

My mother would have said it is beautiful. She would have thought this land—the Garden of Eden.

EDDIE (*good naturedly*).

You read too many books. (*He looks around curiously*) Not much life here.

(*ABE stands in silence watching the sunrise. He does not answer. EDDIE pokes him merrily.*)

EDDIE.

Come on, old moon! Let's display our wares! (*He goes about the deck, whistling cheerfully.*

ABE, suddenly coming out of his reverie, does a quick hand-spring, and joins him.)

EDDIE (*laughing*).

You're a wild jumper, Abe.

ABE (*humorously*).

That comes from splitting rails.

(*They bring out the baskets of vegetables, etc. and arrange them attractively on the deck as they talk.*)

EDDIE (*looking around*).

Don't look as though there'll be much of a market here. Haven't heard a sound since we came.

'ABE (*dryly*).

I heard an owl hooting in the night.

EDDIE (*mournfully*).

Owls don't care much for carrots.

ABE (*optimistically*).

Oh, there will be someone around. There is a levee here, and that old block up there looks suspicious.

EDDIE (*eyeing the auction block*).

Wish they would bring a raft of slaves 'round and sell 'em. Would attract a crowd. Good for our business, Abe.

ABE (*emphatically*).

I wish Congress would abolish slavery. Missouri should never have come into the Union a slave state.

EDDIE (*teasingly*).

Careful, son,—careful! Some of these southerners are apt to lynch you. Besides,—Maine came in—free!

ABE (*hotly*).

The Missouri Compromise of 1820—eh? Twelve free states and twelve slave states! The north pleasing the south, and vice versa. One advantage though—all territory west of the Mis-

Mississippi which lies north and west of Missouri will be free—forever!

EDDIE (*complacently*).

Don't let politics upset you so, Abe. You're not the president! What's a slave—more or less?

'ABE.

They are human. They have an inherent right to freedom. Everyone in the north—

EDDIE (*interrupting him, eagerly*).

Ho! Ho! Some activity on shore! A man approaches the auction block.

(*A man on the shore tacks up a notice on a tree near the auction block.*)

EDDIE.

Let down the gang-plank! I'll investigate!
(*They let down the crude wooden gang plank and EDDIE rushes on shore. He reads the notice and hastens back.*)

'ABE.

What's the news?

EDDIE.

We're lucky, Abe. There will be a sale of

slaves here at nine o'clock. That will bring a crowd. (*Shrewdly*) We'll see some fun—and sell our goods!

ABE.

I would like to go back on an empty boat. Our first trip—especially.

EDDIE.

I would too. Wouldn't like to lose this little ten dollar a month job. Glad we stopped here. (*He laughs cheerfully*) You used your head, Abe. Funny, I thought it too full of politics to sell vegetables!

(*ABE scuffles with him good-naturedly for a moment. Then they sit cross-legged on the deck.*)

ABE.

Nothing to do but wait, I guess. Guess, I'll read.

EDDIE (*drawing*).

Read what? "The Life of Washington?"

ABE (*undisturbed*).

Not this time.

(*He takes a tattered copy of the poems of Robert Burns from his pocket. EDDIE watches him, yawning.*)

EDDIE (*after a moment*).

Well, I guess I'll sit on top of the cabin and watch the fish go by!

(*He climbs up the ladder—perches himself on top of the cabin, his legs dangling over the side.*)

ABE (*mischievously*).

Listen to this, Eddie!

“Ye banks and braes and streams around,

The castle o’ Montgomery!

Green be your woods and fair your flowers—”

EDDIE (*pretending utter weariness*).

Stop it, Abe! Give me the banks of the old Mississippi—any morning in spring.

(*ABE chuckles and goes on reading silently. At length, activity out on the river increases. A raft of lumber floats by. A steamboat whistles shrilly in the distance. Suddenly the sound of strange music is heard. It is restless . . . pleading . . . insistent . . . a stirring threnody that has the lure of the ancient East.*)

ABE (*listening*).

What is that, Eddie! I have never heard anything like it.

EDDIE (*shading his eyes with his hand, and looking down the river.*)

I don't know. Queer, though.

(*Suddenly a ship rounds the curve of the bayou, and docks at the levee near the boys' flat boat. It is a Dutch trading ship and has the weather-beaten aspect of having sailed far, far waters. The name, "African Moon," is painted upon it in crude letters. The people on its deck are a strange sight, indeed,—natives from Africa brought by CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY to be sold as slaves in America. There are about fifteen in all, garbed in weird costumes of scant measure, and bright turbans in bright colorings. "BLACK CONGO," a lad of about fourteen years, sits near the cabin. He is playing the music the boys have heard on a "balipsa,"—a native African wind-instrument which resembles a flute. HONEY ROSE, his little sister, with great dark eyes, sits mournfully beside him. The natives make no sound; they just sit dumbly staring into nothingness. . . .*)

EDDIE (*excitedly*).

Look, Abe,—there are the slaves! A whole boat-load of them!

ABE.

How beaten and cowering they look!

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY *comes out of the cabin. He is a great, uncouth fellow,—shuffling and relentless. He carries a whip in one hand. His eyes rove greedily over the natives. A rough-looking sailor is with him.)*

THE SAILOR (*eyeing BLACK CONGO*).

That music! It gets me. Make him stop it, Captain.

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY (*flourishing his whip over BLACK CONGO*).

Enough o' that!

(BLACK CONGO *ceases to play. HONEY ROSE tucks her hand in his and cowers back—afraid.*)

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY (*still looking over the slaves*).

Pretty sight, ain't they, Sam? Several thousands here! What say? (*He winks significantly.*)

(*A crowd is gathering along the shore, evidently awaiting the disembarking of the slaves. Among them are typical southern gentlemen, with richly dressed women companions*

who carry tiny parasols, wealthy planters and their children, mammies and slaves from surrounding plantations, and several women from the poorer class of whites. Many come to the boat to purchase produce.)

ABE (*bustling about*).

Carrots, Madame?

EDDIE.

Any corn today? Any flour?

(*As the boys sell their produce, CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY starts ashore with his slaves. They are bound together in little groups with chains. ABE, watching at intervals, clinches his hands into fists. The slaver whips them to the place near the auction block. The people making purchases from the boys move about unconcerned. The auction begins. The crowd shuts out the sight from the boys. Now and then the slaver's voice can be heard. The boys continue selling produce. . . . At length their wares are disposed of and they are left alone on the boat. The crowd around the auction block diminishes. ABE and EDDIE watch the progress of the sale. BLACK CONGO and HONEY ROSE are chained with a huge negro named ZANZIBAR. Two sailors un-*

chain him and force him to the auction block. HONEY ROSE and BLACK CONGO are free for a moment. They look around furtively.)

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY (*standing near ZANZIBAR*).

Here you are, folks, Zanzibar—straight from the heart of German East Africa! A real worker! Look at those muscles! Hard as steel! He's docile as a child—can work all day in the blinding sun—and never tire. Make your bids high, gentlemen.

(ZANZIBAR *eyes the captain furiously. The captain tightens his chains.*)

A VOICE IN THE CROWD.

One hundred dollars!

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY (*derisively*).

A hundred dollars for Zanzibar! Never!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Two hundred dollars!

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY (*pretending good nature*).

He will stay on the "African Moon," first!

A THIRD VOICE.

Four hundred dollars!

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY.

That's better. (*Pompously*) Proceed, gentlemen!

(*While all are absorbed in the sale of ZANZIBAR, BLACK CONGO takes the hand of HONEY ROSE and steals away. In the rousing interest of the sale, they are unnoticed. When they reach the edge of the crowd, they run fleetly toward the flat boat . . . ABE discovers them. His eyes search the deck of the "African Moon" cautiously. . . . The black children stare at him appealingly. He motions to them to come aboard.*)

THE VOICE OF CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY
(*heard from the auction block*).

Six hundred dollars for Zanzibar! Sold!

ABE (*to the children*).

Come aboard, children.

EDDIE (*tensely*).

Here come two sailors!

ABE (*rushing the children into the cabin*).

Hide! Hide!

(*As they disappear, he comes back to the deck, nonchalantly. EDDIE is whistling. The two sailors approach them.*)

A SAILOR.

Seen anything of two pickaninies?

ABE.

Not a sign, brother.

(The sailors move on. ABE laughs gleefully as he leans over a basket of corn. Suddenly, CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY rushes down to the "African Moon" in a fit of temper. He paces back and forth on the deck.)

CAPTAIN "DUTCH" HENRY *(brandishing his whip)*.

If I ever find those two black scamps—they wont want to live!

ABE *(in the manner of one taking a vow)*.

If ever I have the opportunity to strike slavery—I'LL STRIKE IT HARD!

(The sun shines on the river,—the slaver struts the deck of the "African Moon" in a rage. Young ABE stands in silence . . . staring at the deserted auction block on the hill. . . .)

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The library of Mrs. NORMAN LEEDS, in her stately colonial mansion in Washington, D. C. Three sides of the room are lined with tall rosewood bookcases containing an almost inexhaustible library. Bits of marble statuary are placed here and there; the model of an American Clipper Ship stands above the fireplace. A great oak table occupies the center of the room; there is a small spinet desk with a Windsor chair before it; a map in the form of a globe holds a prominent place on a marble table nearby. There are also comfortable fireside chairs, a divan, and one or two pieces of pottery for holding flowers. There are long French windows and a colonial doorway which leads into the wide center hall.*

(*It is January 1, 1863,—thirty-seven years since the boys' adventure with the flat boat on the Mississippi. ABE now holds the supreme executive position in America; that of President of the United States. The Civil War*

is raging between the north and south. HONEY ROSE is a trusted "Mammy" in the Leed's home. She has a small daughter, —HONEY ROSE, second.)

(It is New Year's morning. MRS. LEEDS is reading in the library. Enter Mammy with a feather duster.)

MRS. LEEDS (*pleasantly*).

Good morning, Mammy. Happy New Year!

MAMMY (*smiling*).

En de same to yo', Mistress Leeds. (*She busies herself with the duster.*)

MRS. LEEDS.

Have the papers come, Mammy? (*Anxiously*) The world is expecting great news to-day.

MAMMY.

That paper boy sho' am late dis mornin' so I jus' up and sent Honey Rose downtown to get one.

MRS. LEEDS (*confidentially*).

If President Lincoln sets free all the slaves, Mammy,—what are you going to do?

MAMMY (*highly disturbed*).

I'se almost too old to enjoy freedom, Mistress.
(*With deep concern*) Don' yo' need yo' ole mammy any more, chile?

MRS. LEEDS (*softly*).

Don't worry, Mammy. I shall always need you. Why, you have been with me since long before my wedding day! I couldn't do without you. And Gloria,—why, Mammy, that child would be lost!

MAMMY (*relieved*).

Then I can stay—even tho' Mister Lincoln does say I is free?

MRS. LEEDS (*laughing*).

As long as I live!

MAMMY (*meditatively*).

I sho' am glad tho', that if Mister Lincoln sets us free, Honey Rose cannot be bought and sold like a piece of cattle!

MRS. LEEDS.

That is a blessing, Mammy. (*Reverently*) I wonder if there could be anyone as great and wonderful in the cause for humanity as Mr. Lincoln?

MAMMY.

I've tole yo' about de trip on de "African Moon," Mistress Leeds, and how he rescued Black Congo an' me from de cruel "Dutch" Henry. He was only a boy then, but he sho' was hot agin' slavery! (*She continues dusting.*) Well, well,—I wonder where dat Honey Rose can be?

(*Enter a little pickaninny flourishing a newspaper in high excitement.*)

HONEY ROSE.

Mammy! Mammy! Oh, Mistress Leeds,—Mister Lincoln has done gone and done it!

MRS. LEEDS (*taking the paper, joyously*).

Look, Mammy, here it is. All across the top of the page! "Lincoln Issues Emancipation Proclamation!" You are free, Mammy, free!

MAMMY (*tears are gathering in her eyes*).

Free! An ole black nigger like me—free!

HONEY ROSE (*tugging at her apron*).

Don' yo' cry, Mammy. Don' cry! Look,—I'll sho' make yo' laugh!

(HONEY ROSE *turns three amusing somersaults—pigtales flying.*)

MRS. LEEDS (*smiling*).

She's crying 'cause she's happy, Honey Rose.

HONEY ROSE (*candidly*).

Dat's funny.

(GLORIA, *a young girl of seventeen enters, fresh as a flower in a lightsome colonial frock. Her arms are filled with hot house roses.*)

GLORIA (*brightly*).

Good morning, everybody! (*She discovers MAMMY's tear-stained face*). Why, Mammy, what ever has happened?

HONEY ROSE (*in disgust*).

Mistress Leeds says dat she's cryin' 'cause she's happy!

MAMMY (*wiping her eyes with her apron*).

We're free, Missy Gloria, darlin'. All us ole black niggers are free! Mister Lincoln says so!

GLORIA (*enthusiastically*).

Three cheers for President Lincoln! (*She turns to her mother.*) Really, mother,—is it true?

(MRS. LEEDS *hands her the paper*. HONEY ROSE *steals out of the room.*)

GLORIA (*reading*).

"Lincoln Issues Emancipation Proclamation!" Oh,—glorious! (*Her eyes rove over the page.*) Listen to this! "And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons." Isn't that just like the great hearted Lincoln, mother? (*The sound of a knocker is heard.*) Some one is at the door, Mammy.

(MAMMY goes to answer the door. GLORIA begins to arrange the roses in the pottery vases. MAMMY re-enters, followed by two young men and a girl, smartly garbed in riding habits typical of the period.)

GLORIA.

Hello, everybody! Are you going to ride this morning? Isn't it too cold?

JAY.

It's just cold enough to make your eyes sparkle, Gloria. Run along and get into your habit.

GLORIA.

Make yourselves comfortable, then. I won't be gone long. (*She goes out merrily*).

STANLEY.

Well, Mammy, how does it feel to be free?

MAMMY (*smiling*).

I jus' can't fathom it yet, Marse Stanley. I jus' can't!

HELEN.

It's just too wonderful, isn't it? After three whole years of fighting!

(*The sound as of marching feet is heard in the hall adjoining. JAY peers out through the doorway.*)

JAY (*laughing*).

Well, look at this! The Blackbird Parade! Come, see, it would be too bad to miss this!

(*They crowd around the doorway*).

MRS. LEEDS (*good-naturedly*).

If you children must see—let them come in here.

STANLEY.

Bring your soldiers in here, Honey Rose.

(HONEY ROSE enters followed by ten or twelve little darkies from the servant's quarters. They carry paper signs with such phrases as "*We are free!*" "*Three Cheers for Mister Lincoln,*" etc. printed in charcoal upon them. They wear paper hats, and parade comically up and down the room. GLORIA re-enters attired for her ride.)

GLORIA.

Oh, aren't they funny? Look, Mammy, Honey Rose is losing her petticoat!

(HONEY ROSE conducts a hasty retreat. Her "soldiers" follow her.)

GLORIA.

I am ready. Shall we go? Good-by, mother.

(The young people go out gaily. As they pass through the door, "BLACK CONGO" enters, wearing the uniform of a Union soldier. He removes his hat. His kinky black hair is streaked with gray. MAMMY and MRS. LEEDS are unaware of him until he speaks.)

BLACK CONGO (*apologetically*).

I'se beggin' yo' pardon, Mrs. Leeds. Miss Gloria said dat I could come in here.

MAMMY (*gladly*).

Black Congo! (*She surveys his uniform.*)
What has yo' done?

MRS. LEEDS.

It is quite all right, Black Congo. I'll leave you alone together for a little chat. (*She exits.*)

BLACK CONGO.

I cam' to say good-by, Honey Rose. I'se gwine to fight for Marse Lincoln!

MAMMY (*prayerfully*).

De Lawd be praised!

BLACK CONGO (*almost worshipfully*).

Today, Honey Rose, he has done the same thing for our race as he did for you and me,—thirty-seven years ago! He's set us free, Honey Rose! We are free! As free as in our native land along the Congo!

MAMMY.

De Lawd bless yo', brother! (*Suddenly a score of negro voices are heard singing.*) Listen, Black Congo,—dey am singin' down at de Quarters!

(*The singing grows spirited. They listen.*)

THE VOICES.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching,
ing,

Cheer up, comrades, they will come,
And beneath the starry flag, we shall breathe the
air again,

Of the free-land in our own beloved home!"
(*A bugle call is sounded. BLACK CONGO pre-
pares to go.*)

BLACK CONGO (*when the song is ended*).

Well, good-by, Honey Rose! I'se got to answer dat bugle!

(*MAMMY goes to the window. She draws back the curtain.*)

MAMMY.

De soldiers am marchin' by. Dey are wavin' a brand new flag in de wind!

BLACK CONGO.

Dat flag and dis Union is Marse Lincoln's dream, Honey Rose! I sho' am gwine to fight for it!

(*He turns away jubilantly.*)

MAMMY (*following him*).

De Lawd keep yo', Black Congo.

BLACK CONGO (*a little abashed*).

Don' yo' cry, sister. Kiss little Honey Rose fo' me. (*He laughs awkwardly.*) I'se gwine to bring 'er a confederate's hat for a souvenir! (*He goes out—laughing jubilantly. MAMMY watches him go.*)

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE—*A grand stand on the Battlefield of Gettysburg, Penna.; the following autumn, November 19, 1863. Great crowds of people are gathered for the ceremony which is being held to set apart the great battlefield as a burial ground for the Union soldiers who fell there, the same year, July first to third.*

(*The scene is military and impressive. Red, white, and blue bunting forms the chief decoration; the grand stand is draped with it; it is wrapped around the poles. The Grand Old Army Band is playing spirited military airs,—“The Star Spangled Banner,” “America,” “John Brown’s Body,” “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” etc. On the grand stand, PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN, members of his cabinet, EDWARD EVERETT, and other dignitaries of state, are gathered. The President sits rather awkwardly; his great, mournful eyes scanning the battlefield. Military personages are much in evidence; captains, bril-*

dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

(As the President finishes his address, the throng pays him the "perfect tribute" of silence for a moment; then the applause becomes deafening. The band breaks into music; the people cheer, overwhelmed with the spirit of his address. At last, the state officials prepare to disperse. As the President comes down the steps of the grand stand, people crowd around to catch a glimpse of him. A young captain, however, breaks through the crowd, and upon reaching him, salutes, and hand him a message.)

THE CAPTAIN.

A message for you, Your Excellency.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN *(smiling)*.

Thank you, Captain.

(Instead of departing at once, the captain stands aside a moment, then with a sudden gesture stands before PRESIDENT LINCOLN again, jovially.)

THE CAPTAIN *(mischievously)*.

Great speech you made today, Abe.

A SOLDIER (*who stands nearby*).

You'll be court-martialled for that familiarity,
Sir.

(PRESIDENT LINCOLN *subjects them to keen
scrutiny.*)

THE CAPTAIN (*a bit unsteadily*).

Don't you know me, Abe?

PRESIDENT LINCOLN (*memory dawning upon
him*).

Why, Eddie! Eddie Scott!
(*They clasp hands heartily; and laugh together
like boys.*)

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Just a moment, Eddie, until I read this message. It may be important.

THE CAPTAIN (*solemnly*).

I believe it is, Abe.

(PRESIDENT LINCOLN *breaks the seal and reads
the note it contains. At length, he turns
away with a sigh.*)

THE CAPTAIN (*placing a hand on LINCOLN'S
shoulder*).

Bad news, Abe?

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Sad news, Eddie. (*After a moment.*) Say, do you remember Black Congo?

THE CAPTAIN.

And the "African Moon?" I surely do!

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

The message is from him. He's dead.

THE CAPTAIN (*startled*).

And I never recognized him as the little slave we rescued! Why, Abe, he was one of the finest soldiers in my regiment! Decorated many times for bravery. Joined up with us the day you issued the Emancipation Proclamation!

PRESIDENT LINCOLN (*in a low voice*).

Listen! (*He reads*).

DEAR MISTER LINCOLN:

I sho' am sorry dat ole bullet sailed my way in dis battle 'round Little Round Top. Befo' I go to de golden shore, I jus want to let you know that I cert'ly am proud to fight fo' yo' fine ole Union. It sort o' pays yo' back fo' rescuin' that little black boy from Captain "Dutch" Henry—thirty-seven years ago. Don' it, Mister President?

Gratefully yours,

BLACK CONGO.

THE CAPTAIN (*with great feeling; after a moment of silence*).

Oh, Lord! Sherman was right! War is H——!

(*They are silent for a moment. THE CAPTAIN, pal-like, places a sympathetic hand on the president's shoulder. The band is still playing softly.*)

THE CAPTAIN.

It's been a long time since the days of the "African Moon," Abe. We have a long way—.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN (*sadly,—looking toward the west where shadows are falling on Little Round Top.*)

Yes, Eddie,—it's been a long time! We have come a long way!

Curtain.

